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SIVAN

THE SLEEPER.

A Tale of all Time.

BY THE
REV. H. C. ADAMS,
LATE FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD,
AUTHOR OF "THE FIRST OF JUNE," &c.

" Ask not for a curse !
Make not the untold request
Now revolving in thy breast;
'Tis to live again, remeasuring
Youth's years, like a scene rehearsed.
In thy second lifetime treasuring
Knowledge from the first."

CAMPBELL.

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1857.

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SIVAN THE SLEEPER.

CHAPTER I.

Turn o'er the world's great annals, you will find
That laws were first invented by mankind
To stop oppression's rage, for tho' we learn
By nature, good from evil to discern,
What we should wisely seek, or cautious fly—
Yet can we never with a constant eye
Of legal justice mark each nice extreme.

FRANCIS'S HORACE.

IT is in times so ancient, as to anticipate by many centuries the birth of human history—whose thick darkness is broken only by a few scattered rays from the lamp of inspiration, or the wild lights of tradition and legend,—that our story opens. The mountain ranges which stretch to the north and east of the country now known as Carmania or Kerman, were clothed with forests, which had sprung into existence when the waters of the great Deluge had subsided from the face of the earth; nor had they yet attained

to the full maturity of their growth. Through their tangled depths, where the foot of man had never trodden, ranged the monsters of the primal world, whom the order of nature, or the enmity of man, has long since extirpated. Large herds of these would occasionally stray from their usual haunts to invade the cultivated plots of land scattered over the neighbouring plains; and trampling under foot the feeble opposition which the owners could offer, would lay waste all before them and return in safety to their native forests. Other dangers also, of a more deadly description, would from time to time assail the peaceful inhabitants. Bands of armed robbers, led usually by some petty chief who had established his stronghold in the adjoining mountains, and assumed to himself the title of king, would suddenly fall upon their cattle, or carry off their daughters and handmaids to their rocky fastnesses. On these occasions the male population of the neighbourhood would arm and unite in pursuit; and sometimes after much toil and bloodshed, recover the spoil from the invaders, and sometimes leave their own bones to whiten in the mountain passes. But the boundless prodigality with which nature poured forth her fruits from the bosom of the virgin soil, soon effaced the ravages of the wild animals; and the no less rapid growth of population, whose vigour had not yet been impaired by disease, luxury or vice, speedily filled up the gaps in families, which the more deadly inroads of human marauders might occasion. Every head of a family was its priest, ruler, and judge; assigned to every member his place and office; distributed rewards and inflicted punishments, undisturbed alike by interference from without,

or resistance from within, the circle of his petty dominions.

It was evening. The long dark shadows of the mountains had gradually extended themselves over the plain; and the delicious coolness which, succeeding to the burning heat of day, constitutes one of the chief charms of an Eastern night, had begun to pervade the atmosphere. Round a well, which formed the centre of a large encampment, was gathered a group of youths and maidens, engaged in the laborious task of supplying water to herds of sheep and oxen, the sole wealth of those early times: and the low murmur of conversation, mixed occasionally with half-subdued sounds of jest and laughter, came pleasantly on the ear. At the door of his tent, supported by cushions of sheepskin, and wrapped in a long mantle of woollen cloth, folded round his body and gathered in a hood over his head, was seated an aged man, the chief and father of the tribe. His noble features bore freshly the stamp of the divine original in which the first of the human race had been moulded; for between him and his great ancestor but eleven generations had intervened. Though his form was bowed and his locks whitened by more than three hundred winters, he was still hale and vigorous. The light of his full clear eye told of an intellect still unimpaired, and the deep respect and affection with which all whom he occasionally addressed, hearkened to his words, showed that he was one, who was not only obeyed but loved. Yet notwithstanding the general calmness of his demeanour, a watchful eye could detect a half-suppressed restlessness in the glances he cast from time to time in the direction of a high conical rock, on the summit of

which stood a youth of about twenty years of age; watching it seemed for the approach of some expected traveller.

"The hour of moonrise has long passed," at last he exclaimed. "Can you see nothing of him, Sheva, my son?"

"Nothing," replied the youth. "I can distinctly see the whole track as far as the great date-grove, and there is nothing moving any where on it."

"Strange!" exclaimed the old man. "Surely these men, robbers as they are, would not break their solemn pledge to restore my child, if her ransom should be paid. And yet I know not: robbery and bloodshed deaden the conscience. O Rizpah! dearest of the daughters of my old age, loveliest of all that these eyes have rested on, if thou returnest not in honour and safety, what will my life avail me? O man, man! how happy might this world be, the gracious heritage bestowed by the great Father on his children, if ye defiled and embittered it not by your selfish lusts and violence!"

He was startled by a sudden exclamation from the youth.

"My father," he said, "I see a dark figure coming slowly this way from the date-grove; but it is not Arvad, or my eyes deceive me. No," he added, after a few moments' pause, "it is not Arvad; nor is it any one of our kindred and people: his complexion is darker, and his dress different. It is a wayfaring man, and he seems worn with travel. Will you not rise, and bid him welcome, father Sivan?"

The old man rose, with the calmness of natural dignity. "Welcome," said he, as the traveller drew

near ; "welcome, stranger, to the shadow of my roof. Blessed be the feet that have brought thee to the tents of Sivan the Elamite ! Thou art wearied and worn ; rest thee here in peace, till thy repast be prepared, and thy couch spread." So saying, he pointed to the heap of skins on which he had been reposing, and which afforded ample accommodation for the stranger as well as himself, and then resumed his seat.

The wayfarer, with a graceful inclination of the head, and a few words of acknowledgment, hastened to comply ; while the maidens, who had witnessed his arrival, busied themselves with preparations for his entertainment. Some brought water in ewers from the well to wash his feet, some spread a pile of sheep-skins in an adjoining tent, and others arranged on a low table of rough wood a frugal supper of milk, honey, fresh cheese, and dates.

Sivan and his guest scrutinized each other with the grave silence of Eastern manners. The costume of the traveller was, as Sheva had said, wholly distinct from that of his host ; and would, independently of any difference of language and complexion, have stamped him as one of a foreign race. It consisted of a long gown or vest descending to the feet, with sleeves, which would have reached below the fingers, but that they were gathered in folds at the wrist. Round the waist was wound a coloured scarf, which displayed some attempt at ornament. His head, which was closely shaven, was covered by a large cap of thick woollen material, and his feet were protected by sandals of leather, with high sides, fastened round the ankles with straps : the points of

the sandals being very long, and twisted at the end, in the shape of a horn. In his hand he carried a long staff of wood, inlaid with metal, which appeared to serve the double purpose of a support by the way, and a weapon of defence. Sivan was still engaged in his scrutiny, when a second cry from Sheva arrested his attention.

“ My father,” he exclaimed, “ one cometh from the date-grove; and, surely, this time it is Arvad; but I fear he beareth no good tidings; for he moveth slowly and unwillingly, as they come not, whose errand hath been prosperous.”

As he spoke Arvad entered the encampment, and proceeding straight to the spot where Sivan was still seated, bowed his forehead to the ground before him. Then rising up, he stood silent, as waiting to be questioned.

“ The blessing of God be on thee, Arvad, my son ! Bringest thou tidings of Rizpah, the daughter of Meshech ?”

“ Tidings I bring, O venerable Sivan ! yet such as it grieveth me to tell, as it will thee to hear. I repaired me to the caverns where Arioach the robber hath made his abode. I offered him the ransom thou entrustedst to me, and demanded the restoration of our sister. He heard me patiently, and in silence, and replied that he would willingly have given back the damsel, but that she was no longer his captive.”

“ How?—not his captive?—Hath she escaped then? and if so, why hath she not sought our tents ere this?”

“ My father, she is the captive of one stronger and more terrible than Arioach. As he returned from the

ravage of our fields, he and his followers were suddenly assailed by a band of armed men fiercer and more numerous than themselves. Their spoil was wrested from them, and several of their company, our Rizpah among the rest, borne off into captivity. Arioch himself and the rest of his companions hardly escaped alive from their hands."

"Ay, indeed; and who is this new robber, that thus defiles with violence and wrong the bosom of this peaceful land? Knowest thou his name, Arvad, or the place of his retreat, that we may seek him, and either by force or ransom redeem our daughter from exile and servitude?"

"O lord and father of our tribe, deeply I sorrow that I must speak what will wound thine ear. During the short interval that Arioch remained in their hands, ere he effected his escape, he found they belonged to the band of Nimrod the Mighty, the son of Cush; of whom fame reports that he hath penetrated the most secret depths of the forest, and slain with his own hand the hugest of the dreadful monsters that inhabit its recesses. Thou knowest that in these later years he hath gathered together a multitude rather than a band of armed followers, and built vast structures of baked clay, which he calls cities, on the banks of the Euphrates, and on the plains of Shinar. Bribe and threat would alike be unavailing with him. His wealth is too vast for him to be tempted by any ransom thou couldst offer; his power too formidable for the utmost strength of our tribe to assail. Prayers and entreaties are the only weapons left us; and they too, I fear, will avail but little."

The old man gave a deep groan. "O Rizpah," he

cried, "the only child of my Meshech, the youngest born of my old age, slain in his early youth by the accursed sword of the marauding robber, thou wert all that was left to me of him who was the joy and crown of my remaining years, and now thou too art taken from me. Leave me, my son," he continued, turning to Arvad, who still stood in an attitude of profound respect and sympathy before him, "leave me; thou hast done and spoken well, and I thank thee. But I would be alone; this sorrow is too mighty for me."

The youth again bowed his forehead to the ground, and then rising retired to the group of youths and damsels, who had not yet completed their employment of watering the cattle congregated round the well. His tidings were speedily communicated to them also, and a low wail of sorrow and despair arose from many voices.

Sivan scarcely seemed to hear it. He was looking intently upwards to the heavens, in which the moon and the stars were now glowing in all the brightness of an Eastern sky, and pouring over hill and valley, plain and forest, a flood of silver radiance. The solemn beauty of the scene appeared to calm the acuteness of his grief, and soften it down to deep and tender melancholy. "O Thou!" he exclaimed aloud, "so excellent and glorious in thy works, how is it that Thou hast made man the one solitary exception to their law of perfect harmony and beauty? How is it that he useth thus, to the misery of his fellows and of himself, the gifts and faculties Thou hast bestowed on him for purposes so different? Thus has it ever been, more or less, during my sojourn on earth. Violence, cruelty,

and wrong, have ever defaced the brightness of the image in which Thou didst first make man ; and as years pass on, these seem but to increase and to flourish more and more. And yet it cannot be, that Thou who dost hate and abhor these things, wilt always suffer them. They moved Thee once to destroy the whole family of man, save eight only, from the face of the earth ; and though Thou hast promised that that shall not be again, yet surely Thou wilt not allow man to live for nought but to do and to suffer iniquity. It must be that there will come a time when he shall rise to assume the place Thou hast assigned him—the noblest and most perfect of all created things ! But be that as it may, I at least shall never see it. I know, from many a certain token, that the days of my pilgrimage approach their close ; and even now the step of the Angel of Death draws near my threshold. Welcome will his summons be, for my eyes are weary of the oppression and the suffering, wherewith this earth is filled ! ”

He was startled by a voice at his side. He looked up and beheld the traveller, whose arrival he had forgotten in the shock of the recent intelligence, and who had retired to the tent assigned him when he witnessed the arrival of Arvad. Tempted probably by the beauty of the night, he had come forth from his privacy, and, passing behind the tent of Sivan, had seated himself near the spot where the old man was reclining. It was evident that he had overheard the soliloquy of his host.

“ My brother,” he said, “ tell me thy trouble. There is no sorrow that may not be remedied, or at least lightened of half its load, by the counsel of a friend.”

"I thank thee," replied Sivan, with dignified courtesy; "thou speakest wisely, and thy face bears upon it the traces of thought and experience. Yet I fear thy wisdom cannot avail in my present strait."

"I have heard from thy kin that one whom thou lovest has been seized by lawless force, and carried into the bosom of captivity. How is it that thou appliest not to the ruler of thy province, that he send his soldiers in pursuit of the ravishers, recover thy Rizpah, and punish with stripes or bondage those that have done this wrong?"

Sivan turned slightly on his seat, and regarded the speaker with surprise.

"How sayest thou?" he exclaimed, after a long interval. "Who is this ruler of my province, to whom I should appeal; or where are the soldiers that should follow on the track of the robber? I know of none such; but if thou canst tell me of any that will aid me in regaining the treasure I have lost, I will indeed thank thee for thy counsel."

"How," exclaimed the other, in his turn, "hast thou no ruler of whom thou mayest claim protection against wrong or insult? Are there none in this land whose office it is to guard and minister the law? or is every man left to work his own pleasure, with no other restraint than the voice of his own conscience?"

"Stranger, replied Sivan, "I know not of what thou speakest. They who are of my kindred and following do indeed obey my command, and are subject to my control. If disputes arise among them, they come to me to decide their differences, and redress their wrongs; but for others who are not of my kindred, and who acknowledge not my authority, I could but

appeal, in friendly fashion, to the chief of the family to which they belong, or threaten them with force if they complied not. But they who have done me this present injury would but turn a deaf ear to the one appeal, and scoff in security at the other. But tell me, for I perceive that thou comest from some land whose ways are not as our ways, tell me how amongst thine own people, couldst thou, if thou hadst been wronged as I have been, obtain the redress thou seemest to regard as the birthright and inheritance of all?"

"Venerable Sivan," said the traveller, after a few moments of reflection, "I know not whether what I can relate will be counted worthy of thine attention; yet, if thou wishest it, I will tell thee somewhat of that of which I love to speak—the greatness and prosperity of my native land. I am called Melech, the son of Teutames, and the country whence I come, which is many moons' journey distant from this, is known to the children of Shem as the land of Mizraim, or Egypt. Men dwell not there in scattered companies, and in separate tents, but in large communities, and in stately structures of brick and stone, which they term cities. Every father of a family hath authority over his own household as thou hast; but over all, the heads of families as well as the inferior members thereof, is one head, whom all reverence as a ruler, and obey as a parent. To him resort all who hold themselves aggrieved; he hears their tale, inquires into its truth, and decides the matter as strict justice requireth. None are so powerful that they can defy his authority; none so lowly but that they can claim his protection. In truth, none ever question his sentence, or dispute his mandate."

"How," exclaimed Sivan, in great surprise, "are thy countrymen men of different passions from those that dwell in this land, that they will hearken to the voice of reason when it crosses their inclination, and forbids the indulgence of their wishes? Methinks if they will not listen to the pleadings of conscience, which is the witness of God within them, hardly can it be hoped that they will hearken to aught that man can urge, be he ever so wise, or so generally revered."

"Nay," said Melech, "we trust not altogether to reason. Authority is armed with power to enforce its pleasure; there are maintained at the expense of the state, men whose sole office it is to execute the commands of the magistrate, or king, as we call our ruler."

"And how canst thou be sure," said Sivan, after a long pause, "that his decisions will be just? Power that would enforce the right, and defend the oppressed, were indeed a priceless blessing; but that power must be guided by wisdom and uprightness of purpose, or the boon would be a curse."

"Thou sayest well, my father," replied the stranger; "but know, that none are appointed to that office but they whose fame for wisdom and justice warrants the choice. Nor have our rulers thus abused the authority intrusted to them. Mencheres, the son of Suphis, who now sitteth on the throne, hath but lately succeeded to the sovereign power, yet hath he already shown many proofs of wisdom and virtue."

Sivan was silent; then, again renewing the conversation, he asked a great variety of questions respecting the origin and growth of the system which the other described; the length of time it had lasted,

and the various modifications it had undergone; of the administration of the laws, the management of the revenues, and the relation of the state to foreign countries. As the development of each new feature gave consistency and life to the old man's conception of the great idea now first suggested to him, his interest and delight appeared to increase. The night deepened, yet still he sate on, heedless of the flying hours, and drinking in the words of the stranger, which were to him as the fulfilment of a dream cherished fondly but hopelessly for many years. At length he rose. "The night waneth, my guest," he said, "and thou needest repose. I thank thee for what thou hast imparted to me; and, to-morrow, will hear thee discourse further of the happy and glorious country whereto it is thy privilege to belong."

Signing a courteous good night to his guest, he re-entered his tent, and, closing the entrance, folded his mantle around him, and stretched himself on the couch of skins whereon he was wont to repose. But it was long before sleep visited him. Strange thoughts, which were wholly new, and beautiful as new, filled his bosom; dreams of a future for mankind, which would realize the hopes and aspirations which had often at once charmed and embittered his meditations. Man, rising from the slough and mire of his lawless passions, to assume his proper place in the world, of which God had created him the last and most perfect denizen! Man, no longer the object of fear and suspicion to his fellow-man, but one of a mighty brotherhood in which each should cherish, protect, and love the others! True, this bright prospect was as yet confined to a corner of the wide world, but who could

doubt that it would grow and strengthen, until it should include the whole family of mankind?

He was aroused from the slumber into which he was fast sinking by a strange light that broke upon him. He looked up. The entire tent was pervaded by a soft mellow lustre, deepening in brightness as it approached the centre, where stood an Apparition in whose aspect majesty blended with grace, filled the soul of the beholder at once with awe and admiration. Its mighty wings, that sparkled with the intermingling of all bright and gorgeous colours, were spread as if for immediate flight, and wreaths of mist, like snow-white drapery, flowed in graceful folds to its feet. On its features, resplendent with divine beauty, sat an awful calm, that would have smitten the heart with terror, but for the unfathomable love which shone forth from the deep and stedfast eyes. Sivan looked reverently but fearlessly on this glorious vision. Those were days when angels often trod this earth, and men shrank not from them as in later years, when their crimes and rebellion had made such visitations rare, and therefore terrible. Nor did he for a moment doubt who his visitor was. The traditions which had been handed down from his fathers, no less than the voice of his own heart, told Sivan that he was in the presence of the Angel of Death. He rose, and reverently bowing his head, awaited the expected summons.

"Sivan, the son of Elam, the son of Shem," said the Angel, "the days of thy pilgrimage are numbered. I know that thou hast long looked for my coming, and that it causeth thee no dread. Just and right has been thy way before God. Art thou willing and ready to depart?"

"O Angel," replied Sivan, "thou sayest true. I have long looked, nay longed for thy approach ; nor do I fear to go with thee to that land whither my fathers have gone before. An hour since, hadst thou asked me the question, I had freely answered yea ; but the words of the wayfarer with whom I have but now parted, have kindled in me a desire of life that I cannot extinguish. Could it be permitted, I would fain see man rise in the scale of creation from his present abyss of misery and sin to that place, scarce lower than that which thou and thy brotherhood possess ; for which he was at the first designed, and to which there is the sure word of promise that he shall one day attain."

A smile passed over the Angel's face, whether of pity or approval could not be determined. "Sivan," said he, "thy Father already knoweth thy newborn wish. Thy blameless life on earth has risen up before Him in witness for thee ; nor does He condemn that faith in the ultimate perfection of his work on which that wish is founded. If thou dost still desire to be exempted from the common lot of man, and revisit the earth again and again to behold the growth for which thou lookest, of wisdom, purity, and virtue, among the sons of Adam, thy desire shall be fulfilled. Yet pause : remember that this is not the lot that the providence of the Allwise hath assigned thee ; and, though He may permit, He does not command it."

Sivan covered his face with his mantle, and sat long in thought. At length he raised his head. "I have chosen, O Angel," he said ; "if God allows it, I will claim this boon at his hands. Only, let nothing be granted, I pray, that may offend his love, or alienate me from his favour."

"So be it then," was the reply; "stretch thyself on thy couch, and take this branch into thine hand. It was gathered from the Tree of Life, on which thy first parents gazed of old with reverent awe and wonder, as it grew in the fairest of the bowers of Paradise. Whensoever the germ on which thy hopes have fastened shall have grown to maturity, thou shalt awaken and behold its fruits. As often as thou desirest in like manner again to slumber and again to awaken to a new existence, lay thyself down as now; and place the branch on thy bosom. But, whensoever thou wouldest sleep that sleep which hath no waking on earth, break it in twain, and it will summon me to thy side."

Sivan again bowed in acquiescence, and for the last time composed himself upon the pillows whereon his limbs had so often rested. The Angel bent over him with a smile of ineffable sweetness, and delivering the bough into his hand bade him place it on his breast. The old man complied, and in an instant was wrapped in the arms of the profoundest slumber.

CHAPTER II.

Gardens and pillar'd streets, and porphyry domes,
And high-built temples, fit to be the homes
Of mighty gods, and pyramids whose hour
Outlasts all time, above the waters tower.
There too the scenes of pomp and joy that make
A theatre of this vast peopled lake—
Where all that love, religion, commerce gives
Of life and motion ever breathes and lives.

MOORE.

IT was broad noon when Sivan again awoke to existence. He looked round him in perplexity and amazement. All had been a dead blank since the moment when he sank to sleep, and he could almost have believed the whole interview with the Angel to have been a dream; but that the scene in which he now found himself, was not only different from that in which he had closed his eyes, but unlike any that he had ever beheld. He was lying under the shadow of some palm-trees, on the brow of a small eminence, overlooking a broad sheet of water; the banks of which were richly clothed with groves of orange and citron, mixed occasionally with stately acacias and tamarisks. The silver mirror was studded with islets, whose verdure was relieved by flowers of every variety of colour; which grew in prodigal abundance on the shelving shores,

or, descending to the margin of the lake, bathed their heads in the sparkling waters. But there were other objects which rivetted the old man's gaze, and rendered him insensible to the natural beauties of the picture before him. From the bosom of the lake rose huge piles of stone, whose strange and majestic aspect might move the most indifferent spectator to wonder and admiration. Their foundations appeared to consist of solid platforms of rock, edged with massive slabs, that descended perpendicularly so far as the eye could reach, into the bosom of the lake. From some of their terraces sprang columns of hewn stone, whose vast proportions seemed to Sivan to equal the tallest trees of his native forests ; and both these and the flat roofs which surmounted them were richly ornamented from base to summit with representations of men and animals. On others were seated unknown monsters of the strangest and most fantastic appearance ; while others again seemed to be moulded to the shape of man, but were of a size that exceeded in a tenfold proportion the utmost stature of the human race. To believe them to be the work of nature was impossible ; yet more impossible did it seem that human skill could have produced, or human strength have reared, works by the side of which man himself shrank into utter insignificance.

As the old man sat gazing in bewilderment on this strange spectacle, a human form suddenly crossed his line of sight. It was that of a man apparently about thirty years of age. The dress he wore, though wholly different to that of Sivan himself, nevertheless appeared to be familiar to him ; and with a little effort of memory he called to mind that it was exactly

similar to that worn by Melech, the guest from whom he had, according to his ideas, parted but a few hours before. In an instant the whole truth broke upon him. He was in the land of Mizraim¹, the native country of the traveller, to whose words he had listened with such eager interest. His native soil, then, the familiar haunts of his manhood and old age, his friends and kindred, must long have been lost to him for ever. A few natural tears, dull and tardy as those of old age ever are, rose to his eyes as the thought came home to him. But he had no leisure for these reflections. The figure which he was watching, proceeded directly to the waterside, and, stooping down, appeared to be endeavouring to raise something from the surface of the lake. As he bent forward, the more effectually to grasp this object, he suddenly lost his balance, and, with a loud cry, fell headlong into the water, which was evidently very deep, though close in shore. He did not reappear, as Sivan had expected; and, seizing his staff, the old man hurried with all the speed he could command to his assistance. It took him nearly half an hour to effect this, as he had to make the circuit of an arm of the lake, and was several times obliged to turn back from dense thickets which he was unable to penetrate. When he at length reached the spot, he perceived the body of the stranger entangled in a mass of rushes which grew below the water's edge. With some difficulty he drew it ashore; but his utmost efforts failed to restore animation: it was evident that life was quite extinct. He looked round in perplexity and alarm,

¹ Egypt in the most ancient times was called the land of Mizraim.

doubting what might be the issue of this strange adventure; when suddenly he felt a faintness come over him, and fell prostrate and insensible by the side of the corpse. In a few moments he recovered his senses; but on rising discovered, to his terror and amazement, that an extraordinary change had passed upon him. His spirit now animated the frame of the drowned man, while his own body lay lifeless at his feet. As he stood transfixed with awe at this transformation, gazing on the familiar form in which his soul had dwelt for so many years, he beheld it slowly shrink and collapse. The garments became light ashes, like those of linen when cast into the flames; and the body itself gradually crumbled into undistinguishable dust.

All was now clear to him. He had begun a second life on earth, in a new age of the world: he was a denizen of a new land, a member of a new family, with different hopes, aims, and purposes: his knowledge and memory of the past, the only things that remained to him from his former state of existence. It was long before he could fortify himself to enter upon a trial so arduous and so painful. He raised from the ground the branch, which was the only thing that had remained unchanged of all that had before appertained to him, and pondered deeply whether he should not even now break it, and so pass at once and for ever from the face of the earth. But he remembered that the boon had been his own asking, and God's granting; whose pleasure he could not doubt it now was, that he should fulfil the lot that himself had chosen. He sat down by the waterside, and burying his face in his hands, shed a flood of bitterer tears than his

whole former existence had ever called forth. Hour after hour went by, as he still lingered in his paroxysm of sorrow, and the sunset was gilding the foreheads of the gigantic statues, ere he again raised his head. Then he remembered that his task must be done, and he nerved himself to essay it. He first thrust the bough into the bosom of his garments; and then placing upon his head the fish-basket, which he had found clenched in the hand, that had now so strangely become his own, began carefully retracing the path which led to the lake.

* * * * *

It was about a month after this occurrence, that three persons, two men and a woman, might be seen traversing the broad causeway, which led from the town of Arsinoe to the capital city of Memphis. The road was raised several feet above the surrounding country, and strongly secured with embankments on either side, in order to ensure a safe communication for foot passengers and chariots during the months of inundation. Two of the party were in the prime of life, the third was a venerable old man with a flowing beard, who sometimes walked by the side of his companions, and sometimes rode on one of the mules, that formed part of a long string which they were conducting to the city. Their dress declared them to belong to the class of the husbandmen, which ranked in the estimation of the Egyptians next to those of the priests and soldiers. In fact the distinction between the latter class and that of the husbandmen was not very clearly marked: for in times of peace great numbers of the military farmed the land assigned them as their means of maintenance; only joining their standards,

when summoned for foreign service. As a necessary consequence, many belonging to this class passed their whole lives,—when the sovereign of the country had no predilection for war,—without ever being called on to perform military service at all. But the accession of Sesak, the son of Vennephes, to the throne a few years previously to the present time, a prince who had evinced a martial disposition from his earliest years, rendered it very unlikely that this would ever again be the case in the present generation.

The occupation of the little party might not only be inferred from their dress, but was still more clearly evidenced by the contents of the panniers wherewith the mules and asses were laden; which consisted of fruits and vegetables of various kinds, beans and lettuces, peaches, apricots and early grapes; all of them, as it appeared, destined to supply the table of Amenoth, one of the principal priests of Phtah, as the Egyptian Vulcan was called. During the first part of their journey, the road was comparatively free from obstruction, and they had leisure for conversation.

“And so,” said the woman addressing the elder of her companions; “and so the day for the burial of Queen Tahpenes is fixed at last, and the Trial of the Dead is to take place to-day. Art thou sure that thy information is correct? There have been many similar reports before, but all untrue.”

“I am certain, my Meroe,” answered the old man; “our head-slave heard the proclamation some days since in Arsinoe; and yesterday I received a token to the same effect from Amenoth. Nought of less moment would have induced me to make this long journey into Memphis to-day.”

"It hath been long delayed," said Meroe thoughtfully; "thinkest thou that any fear of thy evidence at the trial, hath caused the king to put it off thus long?"

"I know not," was the answer; "it is certain that the late queen did thy mother and her kin great wrong; and some who are about the court are partially acquainted with the facts: but whether that, or the affection Sesak beareth his mother, hath made him defer her funeral so long, I cannot say."

"And what wilt thou do, my father?" pursued Meroe; "wilt thou insist on the rites of sepulture being withheld? I know well that thou wilt do nothing but what thou deemest right and just, else why do men call thee Phares the Just? but I would fain know thy purpose, if I may."

"I shall speak the plain truth," answered Phares; "and tell all even as it happened. The judges, not I, must decide on the sentence."

"And what thinkest thou will be their decision?" rejoined Meroe.

"I cannot say, my daughter; it will probably depend on the evidence of others. The royal Tahpenes had many friends, and did, I doubt not, many good deeds. I would hope that their evidence would outweigh one act of cruelty and injustice. But see you not that we are approaching the city, and the road is getting more crowded, and thy husband seems to lack his usual activity and attention to-day? What ho, Arsames," he cried in a louder tone; "where are thy thoughts wandering? yonder chariot-wheel scarce missed the largest mule's pannier by a hair's breadth. The venerable Amenoth would have rated thee soundly, if he

had seen the peril to which his grapes and apricots were exposed. Seest thou any thing extraordinary in the aspect of the city to-day, that thou fixest thine eyes with such wonder on what thou hast beheld fifty times before ? ”

Thus admonished, Arsames started from his reverie, and proceeded to guide the convoy with greater care through the southern entrance of the city, a huge gateway of dark stone, surmounted by a Sphinx, and garnished with colossal statues on either side. But his attention soon wandered off again to the various objects of interest which the street displayed ; until Meroe, who had several times, only by dint of great exertions, succeeded in preventing a disaster, exclaimed impatiently, that her husband who had been strangely changed during the last few weeks, seemed to have lost his senses entirely to-day. Arsames, however,—or rather to give him his proper name, Sivan,—had more to justify his inattention than either Phares or Meroe had any idea of. In his previous state of existence he had never beheld any building, save a few structures of brick hardened in the sun, reared here and there on the plains of Elam by petty chiefs who used them as strongholds, wherein to deposit their plunder. These bore no more resemblance to the vast mass of brick and stone he was now traversing, than the waters of a roadside pool do to the vast expanse of the ocean. The houses were, for the most part, two and three stories in height, adorned with porticoes supported by carved columns of stone, through which lay the passage leading to the principal apartments. In the lower floors of the shops, which lay entirely open to the street, goods of every variety were exposed

for sale. Here were dresses of all descriptions suited to the different classes into which the Egyptian people were divided, from the robe of the priest with its glittering symbols, and costly embroidery, to the humble garb of the fisherman and shepherd. Here were musical instruments, trumpets, cymbals, flutes of the lotus stem, harps of all shapes, the sacred sistrum, the tambourine and the darabooka drum; some of them already familiar to Sivan, but the greater part wholly unknown. Here again were costly ornaments; necklaces of glass beads from the most famous factories of Thebes, sparkling with a lustre almost equal to that of the diamond; bracelets of carved stone; earrings of ebon and ivory; armlets of coral; anklets of precious metal; cloth of gold manufactured in the looms of Memphis; girdles of lively colours embroidered with gold-thread with a skill modern art has never surpassed. Here again, as if in intentional contrast, were the stern implements of warfare; bows of six feet in length curved at each end, and tipped with horn; arrows of Egyptian reed, headed with stone and sometimes metal; huge maces and clubs surmounted by balls loaded with lead; short triangular-shaped swords; corselets of plate or chain mail; helmets and shields of every material and endless variety of shape. Each new display seemed to be the crowning wonder of the whole, and yet to be in tantly eclipsed by the next that succeeded to it.

Here and there the streets expanded into spacious squares, from the centres of which rose obelisks inscribed with hieroglyphics, or occasionally a fountain sent up its fresh and sparkling waters. In one quarter stood stately palaces, in front of which were

seated judges, surrounded by their officers; in the act of dispensing justice; in another temples, with massive porticoes, similar to those which Sivan had seen rising from the bosom of the lake, adorned with gigantic statues, and walls enriched with gorgeous, though somewhat sombre colouring. There seemed to be no limit to the number of the inhabitants, and no measure to their wealth and luxury. As they passed the chief square, Sivan beheld a numerous array of soldiers splendidly accoutred, executing military movements to the sound of wind instruments. In another part of the city, a long procession of priests and veiled virgins clad in white, passed him on their way to one of the principal temples. Each new spectacle struck him with increased wonder; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he restrained himself from asking every minute the meaning of what he saw.

At last they reached the palace of Amenoth, and passing through the great gates, proceeded to unload their cargo in the courtyard. Here a message was delivered to them by the servants, that Amenoth intended to set out for the Sacred Lake the instant he returned from the temple of Phtah, as the trial of the dead body of Queen Tahpenes was to take place that afternoon. Further, he desired that Phares and his children should go thither in his train; and in order to ensure their presence at the time for setting forth, Arsames and Meroe were enjoined to seek Amenoth at the temple of Phtah, and accompany him home. In accordance with this order they left their mules in the courtyard, with Phares to look after them; and as they had an hour or two to spare

before the time when the sacrifice would commence, strolled out into the town. As they re-entered one of the great squares, they passed near a group assembled round a venerable figure seated on a richly-sculptured chair, who was engaged in dispensing justice to various parties; several of whom were standing near, awaiting their turn to appear before him. Meroe, whose curiosity, now that the business of the day was ended, appeared to be equal to Sivan's own, proposed that they should stay a while, and listen to what passed; and, accordingly, they took up a convenient position where they could see and hear.

The first case was that of a man of middle age, respectably attired, who had charged another of the same class of life with having refused to surrender a deposit left with him some years before; while the latter denied that any such deposit had ever been made. Witnesses were examined on both sides, whose testimony appeared directly to contradict one another. Sivan, who had frequently been called upon to settle similar disputes, felt that he must have dismissed the case as hopelessly obscure. He was amazed to hear how, by a few rapid questions, facts were elicited which had not heretofore appeared, and ingenious attempts at equivocation exposed. After this cause had been decided, a woman came forward, and complained that her house had been broken into during her absence, and her daughter forcibly carried off by a wealthy nobleman. The judge sent his officers to bring both the accused and the damsel before him. On their arrival the latter, who belonged to the lowest of the Egyptian classes, was examined as to her age, and the means employed in

carrying her off. The result was, that the nobleman was ordered to restore her, and pay a heavy fine; partly to the complainant, and partly to the state. Other cases succeeded, in all of which the most impartial justice appeared to be administered, and all alike, rich and poor, high and low, to defer with implicit respect to the decisions pronounced. Sivan was filled with admiration and delight, though mixed with somewhat of melancholy regret. He remembered the insecurity of property in his former life, against which no such safeguards existed; and the last trial had brought forcibly before his mind the lawless violence by which his beloved Rizpah had been torn from him without hope of recovery. Oh, that he had had such a tribunal to appeal to, such a means of vindicating his wrong! How happy was the people that had such guarantees for the secure enjoyment of the blessings of Providence; so powerful a guardianship of their rights! He began to be more reconciled to his new position in life; which up to this point he had found extremely trying, and to think that the shock of the change he had undergone would in time give place to joy at seeing his visions of the future happiness of mankind realized. True, it rather troubled him to find that violence, selfishness, and injustice did not appear to have been eradicated, or even held in entire check by the operation of the wise and wholesome system that had grown up among the people, of whom he now formed a part. But he reflected that it must be a work of time to effect a complete and final victory over evil; nor could he tell how long the wholesome leaven had been working; for as yet he knew not the length of time during

which he had slumbered. But he could not doubt that the growth, however slow, was sure, and must some day reach maturity.

As they left the judge's presence, Meroe warned him that it was time to proceed to the temple, if they meant to comply with the wish expressed by Amenoth. Sivan assented, and in a few minutes found himself inside one of the temples, whose size and magnificence he had admired as they passed it in the morning; and which he had particularly noted, because in front of it stood an equestrian statue of enormous size, with an inscription below, intimating that it represented Rameses the Great, or, as he is often called, Sesostris, the far-famed conqueror of Asia, and builder of the adjoining temple. The interior was yet more striking than the outward aspect had been. From end to end its extent might have been four hundred feet, and its width about two hundred; but so vast was the height to which the roof ascended, that elevation rather than length was its characteristic. Somewhat beyond the centre of the building the pavement was elevated by a succession of steps, and again, further on, and near the extreme end, was another similar rise. On the platform, formed by the first elevation, stood a crowd of priests, among whom the venerable Amenoth was conspicuous, clad in their gorgeous robes of ceremony. Some wore vests of leopard's skin; others aprons, richly embroidered; others, again, long mantles of snow-white linen, completely muffling their figures from head to foot; and nearly all were adorned with necklaces and costly bracelets, and wore garlands of newly-gathered flowers on their brows. Beyond, on

the highest flat, stood the hierophant, his upper robe already laid aside, and his right arm bared, ready to consummate the sacrifice. From end to end the building was intersected by eight rows of massive columns, rising directly from the pavement to the roof, which rested on them. Some of these consisted of female figures, others bore on their capitals human faces, intermingled with various mystic emblems. The walls were almost hidden by paintings, executed in black and red, exhibiting an endless series of designs, the whole of which were to Sivan mysterious and unintelligible.

While he continued to gaze about him, entranced in wonder, a note from a lotus flute was heard from the central platform, and instantly the crowd that thronged the lower area of the temple fell on their knees before the altar. The service commenced with a solemn hymn raised to the accompaniment of stringed and wind instruments, while a cloud of incense was wafted through the temple. A pause succeeded, while the various offerings presented to the god were laid by the priests before the shrine. A low mournful strain was then raised, while the principal sacrifice, a black ox, was led before the altar, and was slain by a blow on the temple. Its head was then separated from its body, and held up to view, while amid the dead silence of all, the presiding priest prayed aloud that God would turn away his wrath, which the people had justly incurred by their sins, from their heads upon that of the victim just offered for them. A second hymn followed, similar to the first, and with this the service concluded. Sivan's heart again was strangely moved. He had been wont

in his own land to offer prayers and sacrifice upon altars erected on mountain-tops, in which celebrations he was sometimes joined by members of his own family, or friends and neighbours. But the majesty of the building round him, which seemed to be indeed a fit dwelling-place for the Ruler of the earth ; the solemnity of the service offered ; above all the spectacle of the vast multitude joining heart and soul in the praises of their Maker and Lord, impressed him with sensations he had never experienced before. Here was the outward symbol, so at least he felt, of the unity in holy things for which his heart yearned ; and where the shadow was already visible, surely the substance from which it emanated could not be long in appearing. But there was no leisure to bestow on these reflections. It was some considerable time before they could extricate themselves from the dense crowd which thronged the temple ; and when they at last succeeded in doing so, they found there was only just time to enable them to present themselves to Amenoth, and take their places in his train, before his cortege set out for the ceremony of the Trial of the Dead.

CHAPTER III.

Herald. He who knoweth of an unpunished crime, let him stand forth, and call to the assembly for vengeance !

Member (rises, his face covered). Vengeance ! vengeance !

Rod. Upon whom dost thou invoke vengeance ?

* * * * *

Rod. Accuser, come before the altar, and swear to the truth of thine accusation.

Accuser (his hand on the altar). I swear.

SCOTT.

A LARGE concourse of spectators was assembled near the Sacred Lake, belonging to the nomade or district of Memphis. The spot wore a sombre and melancholy appearance, which was partly its natural aspect, and partly had been produced by artificial means, in accordance with the taste of the Egyptians, the most deeply imaginative people that the world has ever seen. The sullen sheet of water was broken only by a few rocky islets, not one of which bore the slightest trace of vegetation ; and the level shores in all directions looked wild and desolate ; not a tree any where raising its head, save a few cypresses, whose foliage deepened rather than relieved the general gloom. Beyond, on the further shore, rose the Royal Sepulchres, built of black marble, and presenting to the eye one long, unbroken line, varied neither by tower nor

pillar. On the nearer bank was moored the bark used to convoy the sacred boat of the dead across the water, and the ferryman in his sable garb stood ready at the stern. Higher up on the bank were ranged the judges, forty-two in number, in a deep semicircle, with the president at the upper end. At a short distance was seated another group, consisting of the principal witnesses, among whom Amenoth and his three companions might be desctried. All were arrayed in mourning garments, and silence, unbroken by the slightest sound, notwithstanding the long delay in the arrival of the procession, pervaded the assembly. So still was the entire scene, that a casual spectator might have half believed it to be a pictured representation, rather than a real concourse of living men.

At length, when the shadows of twilight were beginning to render less distinct the distant outline of the royal tombs, a faint dull tramp, as if of many feet moving solemnly at a considerable distance, broke the profound silence of the spot; and presently a long train, preceded by torches that cast a red and pitchy light around them, wound its way slowly to the place of rendezvous.

In front appeared a number of servitors carrying fruits and flowers to decorate the altars of the dead, and leading animals to be offered as sacrifices. After these came cars containing the sacred closets, in which the mummies of the deceased queen's ancestors had been kept between the times of their embalming and interment. Then followed another train of servants, bearing jewels and ornaments to be deposited in the tomb along with the corpse. These were succeeded by the empty chariot of the dead, with its team of

horses in funereal trappings, and the charioteer walking on foot at their side. Next appeared the baris, or consecrated boat, having the eye of Osiris, the judge of the dead, painted on its prow and rudder. It was supported on a sledge drawn by oxen, and surrounded by a crowd of hired mourners in loose and disordered dresses, wailing and lamenting, beating their breasts and casting dust on their heads in token of sorrow. Last in the procession were the near kindred of the queen, Sesak himself walking first as chief mourner, deeply muffled in his flowing robes, and preserving, like the rest, a profound silence.

In this manner the cortege slowly advanced, without interruption, winding round the level shores of the lake; until the sledge, with its mournful freight, had reached the spot where the ferry-boat was anchored. But as the slaves in charge of the sacred bark proceeded to lift it from its stand, in order to launch it on the waters, two priests of Osiris stepped forward with uplifted wands, and in the customary form commanded them to forbear.

"Ye who have brought this body hither," they said, "to be conveyed across the Waters of the Dead, declare the name and title of the deceased, in order that this court here assembled may determine whether or not he be entitled to enter the society of the Everlasting Gods, and partake of their blessedness, or be justly condemned to exile from their presence."

An officer, dressed in a funeral garb, and having his hair and beard closely shaven, the chamberlain of the late queen, stepped forward.

"Venerable judges," he said, "she who here awaiteth your doom was called in life Tahpenes, the daugh-

ter of Rhamses, wife of Vennephes, late monarch of this land, and mother of him who now sways its sceptre. Sixty and five years did she pass on earth; and now the ever-blessed Osiris hath claimed her for his own. Wherefore, we crave permission to bear her across the Lake of the Dead, that she may rest in the Sepulchres of her fathers.

As he concluded, the presiding judge rose in his place.

"Men of Egypt," he said, "and dwellers on the shores of the mighty river, lo! Tahpenes, the daughter of Rhamses, claims at our hands judgment as to her past life; whether she shall be accounted worthy to enter the company of the happy dead, or be excluded therefrom as unworthy. Wherefore, if any can bear witness to the deeds she hath done in the body, whether these be good or evil, let them appear before us, and speak without restraint; remembering only the dictates of truth and justice; for with the dead there is no distinction of rank or riches."

Thus summoned, several persons, consisting chiefly of the household of the deceased, came forward, one by one, and gave their testimony to her virtues, and her strict observance of all religious ordinances. After these a man presented himself, whose dress and appearance were different from those of the Egyptians, and who announced himself to be an ambassador from Jeroboam, king of the ten tribes of Israel, who, hearing of the death of the queen of Egypt, had sent to offer his witness in her favour, in grateful remembrance of the hospitality and kindness she had extended to him in his adversity, when an outcast and fugitive from his native land.

A long pause succeeded, and the president again arose. "So far as we have heard," said he, "the testimony offered hath been most favourable to the dead; and if no more be advanced, our sentence cannot but be one of acquittal: but as we sit here to do justice in the name of the Ever-Blessed Gods, I charge all present that they conceal and keep nothing back, lest they make us, the judges of truth and justice, to pronounce an unrighteous sentence."

As he resumed his seat, an old man arose, and walked slowly and unwillingly to the spot where the witnesses had given their evidence.

"Who art thou?" said the presiding judge; "and what knowest thou of the dead?"

"I am Phares, the son of Araph," was the reply, "and I come forward, though reluctantly, in obedience to thy summons, to charge her who lieth here with violence and injustice."

A slight stir was heard in the vast assembly as these words were uttered, while all turned with interest to look more closely at the speaker. Sesak himself made a step or two forward. The twilight had gradually deepened during the previous proceedings; but the light of the torches which fell full upon the old man's figure, made it clearly distinguishable by all.

"Speak, witness," said the judge, "and declare her crime."

"Venerable judges," resumed Phares, "in my earlier years I was enamoured of a damsel, called Paranis, the daughter of Theron. Her father, a husbandman like myself, dwelt near the summer palace of Queen Tahpenes. One of his fields lay so close to the royal garden, that he could see and hear all that passed

within it. She commanded him to surrender it to her, and offered an equivalent in money. But Theron, who had a spirit as proud as her own, was angered at her haughty words, and refused. Many times were her overtures renewed, and rejected; and daily the wrath of both parties waxed fiercer and fiercer. At last one day Theron was missed, nor did he ever reappear. Paranis, my newly-wedded wife, succeeded to his lands; and shortly afterwards I was applied to by the queen's treasurer with the same offers that had been made to Theron. Fearing that if I refused Paranis might also disappear as her father had done, I accepted the money tendered, and quitted the neighbourhood. But, alas! my beloved wife survived not long the shock of her parent's death, and her own separation from the home of her youth. She sickened and died within a twelve-month, leaving me the sole parent of one helpless babe."

"Old man," interposed Sesak hurriedly, as Phares paused, "there is no proof here of that whereof thou accusest my mother. Men disappear by many a strange chance, without violence being offered to them: nor is there aught to connect her with his disappearance."

"Tarry, I pray you," pursued Phares. "It chanced, some five years ago, that I and my daughter were summoned hastily one day to the palace of Amenoth, priest of Phtah. On my arrival I found a man lying on a bed, at the point of death. He had been injured by the fall of a heavy stone near the palace of the priest, and had been carried within by order of Amenoth himself. He was arrayed in the dress of Queen Tahpenes's household, and had been, I learnt, one of

her most trusted servants. Finding his hurt mortal, he had prayed that we might be instantly sent for, and we arrived but a few hours before his death. In our presence, and that of Amenoth, he confessed that he had been bribed to slay Theron: that he had pierced him to the heart with an arrow, as he was returning homeward from the city, and had buried the body near a cluster of palm-trees, which he described. We proceeded thither with chosen witnesses, and found the skeleton of the dead, with some remains of the dress and ornaments he had worn, which were instantly recognized by Theron's old servants, and by myself."

"Hast thou witnesses to the truth of thy tale?" asked the judge; "if so, let them come forward."

Amenoth, Meroe, and two servants stepped forward at this invitation; and each of them corroborated various portions of Phares's evidence. The judges listened in ominous silence to their testimony, which no one offered to refute or discredit. Sesak himself made no second attempt to interfere, but continued to stand near, wrapped in his robe, and gazing intently on the several witnesses as they stood forth. When they had concluded, a fresh proclamation was made, calling on any one who could disprove or invalidate aught that had been advanced, to appear and do so. To the surprise of the audience, Phares once more arose. "I could not keep back my tale," he said, "though sorely reluctant to make it known; but I have that to add which may materially affect your decision. The servant, by whose hand the murder was wrought, assured me that it was resolved on by the queen in a moment of sudden wrath, and had been deeply repented of ever afterwards. Nothing but her

ignorance of the spot whither I had retired, which he had himself only discovered by accident, prevented her from seeking us out, and making all possible reparation. Let this fact, I pray you, not lack its weight in determining your sentence."

As he spoke he withdrew in company with the other witnesses, and was lost in the crowd. The judges gathered closer together and discoursed in earnest whispers among themselves; while the multitude stood at a respectful distance, and the mourners still retained their places, all hushed in reverent silence. A long interval passed thus. At length the judges once more resumed their places, and the president rose to declare the sentence of the court.

"Men of Egypt," said he, "we have dispassionately weighed the evidence submitted to us, and are agreed that Tahpenes, the daughter of Rhamses, now on trial before us, hath been guilty of a great crime, such as cannot but unfit her for the company of those Blessed Ones who loathe violence and bloodshed. Yet forasmuch as her life seemeth otherwise to have been blameless, and there is proof that she repented of a sudden act of iniquity, we adjudge her to be forbidden the rites of sepulture for the space of two years only; after which time, her body may cross the Sacred Lake, and rest in the tombs of her forefathers.

A murmur of approbation ran through the crowd, participated in by all but the relatives and followers of the queen. These raising anew their cries of lamentation, in more piercing accents than before; for the disgrace of a refusal of the rites of sepulture was counted the greatest of all calamities; prepared instantly to accompany the corpse, on its return by the

same road it had before traversed. Sesak, overwhelmed by sorrow and humiliation, again followed in the rear of the procession ; while the crowd, with the same quiet and orderly demeanour which had distinguished them throughout, slowly dispersed, returning in scattered groups to the city ; and the shores of the Lake were soon, once more, entirely desolate.

Sivan accompanied his wife and father-in-law to the palace of Amenoth, and the next morning the whole party returned to their peaceful home near the shores of Lake Moeris. He was profoundly impressed by what he had seen and heard. His loftiest visions of the reign of truth and justice upon earth, had hardly come up to the reality of what he had lately witnessed. The highest station, the most unbounded power, the very presence of kingly authority, armed with all its strength, had proved insufficient to screen an offender from receiving the just penalty of his deeds, although the persons injured were wholly destitute of all strength, save that of right and equity. He felt, now at least, convinced that Melech had not overstated the blessings resulting to mankind from the substitution of law and order for the voluntary acknowledgment of natural rights, or the power of the strongest arm to enforce it, if refused. His heart expanded with generous delight as he thought of the glorious fruits, which, in the fulness of time, that tree would bear, which had already put forth leaves and blossoms in such abundance. How high a privilege to be a citizen of such a land ! How gracious was the mercy that had so fulfilled the longing wish of his heart !

Not long after the trial of Tahpenes, commenced the annual inundation of the Nile, which, in the course of

a few days, entirely submerged their fields, leaving their cottage and the narrow strip which connected them with the high road, alone visible above the waters. Sivan's active mind soon began to feel the want of employment. He had little taste for the feastings and merry-makings, with which his neighbours beguiled the idle hours; and still less fancy for the public games celebrated in the larger towns, the leaping matches, the wrestling bouts, and the bull-fights, which formed the chief attraction to those of his age and occupation. Nor did Meroe's favourite games of odd and even, and spellikins, or even Phares's more intellectual amusements of draughts and chess, find greater favour with him; though he would occasionally pass an hour or two in these diversions, in order to please them. His time hung heavy on his hands: and he eagerly caught at a proposition made by Amenoth, who had fixed his residence for the winter in the neighbouring town of Arsinoe, to teach him something of geometry, and the other elementary branches of knowledge, with which most Egyptians were acquainted. The good priest, who had first taken notice of Sivan's intelligence and desire of knowledge on the day of the trial, soon became interested in his pupil; and after awhile would sometimes travel away from the subjects immediately in hand, to satisfy his hearer's curiosity on points of theology and history. In the course of these conversations, Sivan gathered that the fundamental doctrine of the Egyptian religion was the same which he himself and the patriarchs before him had always held—the entire and absolute unity of the Deity. But his attributes being symbolized under a variety of forms, each of which had its own distinct name, its

separate temple, and its peculiar priesthood assigned to it, gave an unlearned spectator the notion that a plurality of gods was worshipped. Thus, for instance, God, when regarded as the Creator of the world, was called Phtah ; as the Generator of the human race, Khem ; as the Revealer of all secrets of nature, Amun ; and so on, through many other titles. When Sivan remarked that the people generally did not seem to apprehend this distinction, but regarded each of these titles as separate Deities, Amenoth replied that he was well aware such was the case ; but the subject was too difficult for their comprehension ; and as the practical effect on their daily lives, arising from their error, was probably very slight, he and his brethren thought it best to trust to time and the spread of knowledge to correct it. This explanation, if it did not wholly satisfy Sivan, at least relieved his mind of a great difficulty which had of late pressed upon him very disagreeably. He had begun to fear that the religion of the land of which he had now become a native, actually recognized and upheld idolatry ; and he was pleased to find, that though the evil did exist, it was nothing but a popular corruption ; which would disappear with the wider diffusion of knowledge.

On another occasion, when the subject of the ancient history of Egypt happened to be mentioned, it occurred to Sivan to inquire, how long it was since Mencheres, the son of Suphis, had reigned in Egypt. He remembered distinctly that Melech had mentioned his name, as being that of the king who was reigning in the land of Mizraim, when he himself had quitted it : and thus Sivan hoped to obtain some clue as to the length of time during which his sleep had lasted,

a subject which had always caused him much anxiety. The priest opened his eyes in amazement, as he heard the question. "Mencheres, the son of Suphis," he exclaimed; "my son Arsames, what canst thou desire to know of a monarch, every authentic particular of whose history is either fabulous or hopelessly obscure, unless we except its tragical and mournful end? The very name of Mencheres exists only on a few of the most ancient monuments, written in that language which none but the most learned of our scholars can decipher. So far as can be ascertained, nearly a thousand years have elapsed since Suphis, his father, mounted the throne of this land; and more than nine hundred since his hapless successor was conquered and deposed by the shepherd robbers of Arabia, who for several generations afterwards oppressed this people. Tell me, my son," he continued, his curiosity evidently strongly excited, "where and from whom canst thou have heard of him?"

Sivan with some difficulty evaded his questions, and passed off to other subjects; but his attention wandered during the remainder of that day's studies. He was much moved by what he had heard: yet he could hardly tell whether a feeling of regret or satisfaction predominated. It was painful to him to resign entirely every kind of connexion with his former state of existence. He had hitherto fancied that some clue to his posterity might be found, if sufficient pains were taken to enable him to discover it; nay, he had even thought it possible that some of those whom he had known on earth might still be lingering in extreme old age. But the great length of time, which he now found had intervened since his interview with the

Angel, must long ago have obliterated all trace of his family and kindred ; and such speculations were now at rest for ever. Yet it was a satisfaction to have arrived at a solution of the mystery ; and he could not but acknowledge that after all it was better for him, and more likely to conduce to his ultimate contentment, to know that every tie which connected him with the past was irreparably severed. These thoughts so occupied his mind, that he found himself unable to pay the necessary attention to the subjects on which he was engaged, and he accordingly took his departure homewards somewhat earlier than usual.

As however he was passing through the portico of the palace into the street, a guest entered, whose appearance at once aroused his attention anew. He was a man of noble countenance and a commanding stature. His complexion, unlike the swarthy Egyptians, or the olive-tinted inhabitants of the plains of Elam, was a clear, fresh white, relieved by a ruddy tint on either cheek. His hair, long and wavy, was of a rich auburn, and his eyes a sparkling grey; contrasting strongly with the dark locks and black eyes of the Egyptians. His dress consisted of a light cuirass of brass, crossed from shoulder to hip by a belt containing a scabbard, in which hung a short sword two feet or so in length. Upon his head was a helmet of conical shape, surmounted by a lofty plume. On his feet he wore sandals, secured to the legs by thongs that wound half way upward to the knee. A tunic of leather descending below the cuirass to the thigh, and a scarf of a scarlet colour worn over the shoulder, completed his equipment. Sivan looked with admiration at the noble proportions of the

stranger, mingled with a half consciousness that he had seen him on some former occasion. At length he remembered that he had been pointed out to him by one of the crowd on the memorable evening of the trial, as a native of a distant and half-barbarous land, called Greece; at present a guest at the court of Sesak; whither he had fled, as was commonly believed, on account of the accidental slaughter of one of the priests of Neptune. The foreigner regarded Sivan, as it seemed, with no less interest than he had himself awakened; and after a few moments' consideration, inquired in imperfect Egyptian, whether his name was Arsames, the son-in-law of the old man whose evidence on a late occasion had caused the corpse of Queen Tahpenes to be refused interment. Sivan replied in the affirmative, and the Greek thereupon contemplated him with increased interest, not unmixed, as he fancied, with compassion. He inquired his occupation and place of residence, and paid close attention to the replies he received. He made, however, no further observation; but, with a courteous salutation, passed him, and entered the palace. Sivan marvelled awhile at the occurrence; but his mind was much occupied with other subjects; and as he never again encountered the stranger during his subsequent visits to the city, the whole circumstance soon faded from his recollection.

After a continuance of nearly five months the floods subsided, and they began to sow their fields, over which the retiring waters had scattered a rich manure of loam, some with wheat and barley, others with fruits of various kinds. In these labours, which the rich soil and delicious climate of Egypt render so light

and genial, the winter months passed away. By the middle of January a plentiful crop had sprung up, and they then resumed their visits to the adjoining towns, which continued to be a source of admiration and delight to Sivan. He had now also sufficiently progressed in his studies to be able to pursue them alone at intervals between the hours of labour. During these months he had become much attached to his new relatives. The simple, upright character of Phares secured his respect and affection ; and as for Meroe, she had become most dear and precious to him. She was gentle, sunny, and lively-tempered, and the deep love with which she regarded Sivan had awakened a corresponding feeling in his breast ; for with a renewal of youth had come a revival of its hopes and passions. Thus months passed on ; and when in the early summer of the year he bent over the cradle of their first-born infant, he felt that the last shadow of regret for the past had vanished. He had health and strength, competence, a cheerful home, kind friends, and affectionate relatives ; above all, he felt that he dwelt under the protection of a power which secured him against violence and wrong—that the strong could not oppress, nor the envious injure, nor the crafty cheat him with impunity : and in the indulgence of these golden visions he was contented and happy.

CHAPTER IV.

Piers. A just revenge.

Tyler. Most just indeed, but in the eye of the law
'Tis murder, and the murderer's lot is mine.

Alice. Fly, my dear father, let us leave this place
Before they raise pursuit.

SOUTHEY.

LATE one night about two months after the birth of the infant, the household of Arsames was disturbed by a knocking at the outer door, and a voice asking in carefully subdued accents, for admittance. The circumstance caused much surprise, for the inundation was now at its height, so that their visitor could be no wayfarer imploring shelter for the night, but must needs be some one who had some distinct motive for seeking them, and the hour was a strange one to select for that purpose. Sivan's wonder was not diminished on opening the door to see the Greek stranger with whom he had exchanged a few sentences at the entrance of Amenoth's residence many months before; and whom he now instantly recognized. The applicant for admission carefully and without noise closed the door after him, and passing on to the principal apartment, requested Sivan to arouse his wife and his father-in-law, with whom he wished to confer as well as with

himself, on matters of moment to them all ; but to make the fact of his presence known to no one else. Sivan complied, and in a few minutes the little family were assembled ; and the Greek addressing himself to Sivan in much more intelligible Egyptian than he had spoken on the occasion of his former interview with him, began an explanation of the cause of his visit.

"Worthy Arsames," he said, "thou wilt recollect, no doubt, having seen me a few months ago in Arsinoe, and my inquiring of thee thy place of residence. I did so because I then had some cause to fear that evil was impending over thy house. It was then little more than a surmise : but within the last few days, facts have come to my knowledge, which have ripened my conjectures into conviction. I would first, however, ask, if any of you have, of late, noticed a man constantly loitering about in the neighbourhood of your premises, ostensibly employed in fishing ; but really, as I suspect, with a very different motive."

"Yea," answered Meroe ; "I have observed him almost ever since the commencement of the floods, and have marvelled what could induce him to select a spot so little likely to repay the trouble he undergoes."

"How was he dressed ?" inquired the Greek ; "and what was his general appearance ?"

"There was nothing remarkable in his attire," said Meroe ; "he wore a linen shirt fastened by a girdle round his waist and a large thick cap on his head. He had also, as I think, an upper mantle which lay folded up in the end of the boat. But what struck me more particularly about him was a large scar on one cheek which seemed as though it had been caused by a sword-cut."

"I remember him also," added Phares; "such a man as you describe was frequently to be seen in the fields near our grounds, before the rising of the Nile began. He was then, to all appearance, employed in fowling."

"It is even as I suspected," said the Greek; "the man is a spy in the service of Sesak, and one of his most unscrupulous agents, unless I am misinformed. His presence bodes thee no good, O Arsames, nor thy family either. I was present when thy father-in-law gave his evidence before the tribunal of the dead; and, by Hercules, his noble fearlessness made me long to step forward and clasp him by the hand, as a man worthy of a free-born Athenian's friendship. It chanced that same evening, after the return of the funeral procession, that I overheard some words which passed between Sesak and one of his body guard, of whom it is currently reported that he hath been frequently employed in affairs of no reputable character. As I entered somewhat hastily one of the lower chambers of the palace, in which as thou mayest know I was a guest, I heard the king say, 'That nest of traitors shall bitterly rue their vindictive insolence!' At my entrance Sesak started hurriedly to his feet, and the man with whom he was conversing drew a dagger from his girdle; but at a private signal from the king, he replaced it. I conjectured that he did not feel sure that I had heard his words at all; and further, that he relied on my ignorance of the Egyptian tongue, even supposing that my ear had caught them. He was the more confirmed in this impression because I gave him not the slightest reason throughout our interview to suppose that I had heard any thing unusual: for it is

not our Greek fashion to betray our thoughts to the eyes of those who would fain fathom them. But I treasured the speech carefully up, for I suspected it had some reference to the noble old man whose brave words were still ringing in my ears. Therefore it was, O Arsames, that I inquired of thee where thou didst reside. Thou rememberest our interview, I doubt not?"

"Right well," answered Sivan, "and I marvel I so soon forgot it at the time."

"I kept a careful watch," resumed the Greek; "but months passed away, and nothing transpired to substantiate my suspicion. In truth the whole affair had almost vanished from my recollection; when a circumstance occurred which convinced me that my first surmise was correct. I noticed about three weeks ago a man in Sesak's ante-chamber waiting to be admitted to his presence, whom I remembered to have seen somewhere, though when and where I could not for a long time recall. Suddenly it flashed upon me that it was the soldier whose conversation with Sesak I had interrupted on the evening of Queen Tahpenes's trial. His dress was quite different, it was true, being exactly what thy wife, O Arsames, has described; but I recognized the scar on the cheek, and the ferocious cunning expressed in the eyes. His presence in that place in disguise, and his evident desire to avoid my notice struck me forcibly, and I resolved to watch him. I have ascertained that he hath been resident for many months in the city of Arsinoe, and hath gone forth regularly every morning into the country, returning at sunset, ever since the day of the trial; and further that he hath had interviews with King Sesak, in his

private chamber in his palace at Memphis, on several occasions. The fact of his having, during all that time, hung about thy vicinity, satisfies me that the threat I overheard in the first instance, proceeded from no sudden burst of anger, but from a deep-set purpose of revenge ; and that a plot is even now in progress to destroy thee and thine."

"I care not," said Sivan. "He dare not injure us. Thanks be to heaven, we dwell in a land where the oppression of the great is not suffered to prevail over the rights even of the humblest. Surely, my father," he continued, observing that while the eyes of the Greek regarded him with approval, those of his relatives were fixed on him with blank amazement as they heard his speech, "surely the voice of the law in this land is more potent than the voice of any individual. I have heard thyself say so many and many a time."

"My Arsames," replied Phares, "doubtless the law acknowledges no distinction of ranks ; but art thou so young in experience as not to know that the wealthy and powerful have means at their command of evading the law, and making it of none effect ? yea, by Osiris, oftentimes do they make the law itself the instrument of working out their unrighteous ends. Many are they who have suffered as much, ay, it may be more, injustice—heavier wrong, under the administration of human law, than could have been offered them had no law existed among men. As regardeth thy information, noble stranger, if this danger threatened me alone, I should be well contented to abide it, though I underrate not its imminence. The few years.

that may yet remain to me are not so valuable in my eyes, that I should undertake any great labour to preserve them. Amenoth too, thanks to his high station and sacred calling, is safe. But, if I heard thee aright, thou didst say that the king meditated not my ruin only, but that of my children also."

"Even so," said their visitor, "such was undoubtedly his meaning."

"But surely," once more interposed Sivan, who had with difficulty restrained himself during Phares's speech, "thou canst not mean to say that power is free to work any unrighteous ends it may conceive, and the law is impotent to prevent it. Where were the efficacy, or value of laws, were such the case? Recollect also, the very occasion which has given rise to this supposed danger. Granting that our sovereign had no regard for human enactments, yet doth he not know that he must himself one day be tried, where his power and influence will avail him nothing: and where the heaviest penalties will fall upon him if he should suffer himself to transgress, even with impunity during his life, the dictates of justice?"

Phares smiled. "I envy thee thy faith," he said, "in the institutions of our country, nor would I undervalue them; yet, surely, it needeth but little acquaintance with man's nature to know that if he fears not immediate and present punishment in this life, still less will he be moved by the dread of penalties which may await him after death, remote and uncertain as the wicked ever consider them. Nay, look not so cast down, my Arsames; we have, in sooth, no time to bestow at present on general speculations.

Rather tell us, excellent stranger, to whose generous kindness we are so deeply beholden, what dost thou thyself advise."

"I know not," replied the Greek, "the customs of this country sufficiently to be able to give you any more particular advice, than to fly without delay to some place of safety, until Sesak shall cease to reign, or at least until he hath taken his departure on the expedition he is even now meditating. He is preparing, as thou mayest perchance have heard, to make war upon a city called Jerusalem, that lieth, as I hear, not many miles from the Egyptian frontier. The ambassador, whom thou sawest on the occasion to which we have so often referred, came from a sovereign who hath revolted from the king of Jerusalem, and is anxious to raise up enemies against him. He hath inflamed the cupidity of the king of Egypt by detailing to him, through his ambassador, the treasures which the city of his rival contains. For forty years, he avers, the father of the present ruler, Solomon, the son of David, by name, was engaged in collecting together the most precious products of all lands; and the gold and jewels wherewith the chief temple of the capital is adorned would, by themselves, exceed in value the treasures of the wealthiest monarchs in the world. Sesak is even now making his preparations for the enterprise, though he has not openly avowed his purpose. Doubtless, ere many months have elapsed, he will have set out. He may never return; or, if he should, he may, not improbably, by that time, have forgotten his cause of enmity against thee. But the night waneth, and I must be gone; for, should it be known that I have held any communication with thee, it would defeat my

purpose, and advantage neither of us." He pressed their hands cordially, and without waiting for their renewed thanks, quitted the house.

A long consultation was held after his departure; and it was at length agreed that the advice of Meroe should be adopted. She proposed that they should proceed in their boat, by night voyages, beyond Syene, the furthest point of Sesak's dominions; lying hid, during the day, in the mountain caves with which the shore of the river abounds. Their own boat, which they sometimes used to convey the products of their fields to Memphis, when the canals communicating with the Nile were full, was large enough to contain, not only them, but sufficient provision for the voyage; and yet was not too large to be concealed in a thicket or cave during the day. It was resolved, therefore, that they would load the boat on the morrow, as if they were about to proceed with it, in the ordinary course of business, to the city; and then, in the evening, as soon as the spy had departed, they were to set out without revealing to any one the step they were about to take.

Accordingly, the next day, at sunrise, they commenced their task, filling the bottom of their little bark with such necessaries as they considered of most importance, and taking care to make a great display of fruits and vegetables heaped above the gunwale. The whole day had been employed in the various preparations which their sudden resolution rendered needful: and it was about five o'clock in the afternoon, when Sivan and Phares, who were occupied in collecting a few articles, from various quarters, that were yet wanting to complete their cargo, were aroused by

a piercing shriek from the water's edge. They rushed instantly out of doors ; and the first object they beheld was Meroe gazing frantically on the dark waters, and tearing the locks that streamed wildly over her bosom. " My child, my child ! " she screamed. " Great gods, give me back my child ! " In a moment, they were at her side, and gathered with difficulty from her incoherent exclamations, that a huge crocodile had issued from the flood, and had seized upon the infant as it lay in its cradle of reeds on the bank. No precautions were wont to be taken against these monsters, as they were never known to frequent the neighbourhood in which Sivan's house was situated ; and Phares had little doubt that the animal must have escaped from one of the sacred tanks in the adjoining city of Arsinoe, where they were kept and tended. Burning with grief and anger, Sivan caught up his bow, and, as the crocodile rose to the surface for air at a little distance, he let fly an arrow with so true an aim as to pierce its eye ; and the barbed point penetrating to the brain, caused it in a few minutes to float, a hideous carcass, on the surface of the waters.

" Great heaven ! what hast thou done ? " exclaimed Phares. " Knowest thou not that these creatures are sacred to Osiris, and that any who injure, nay, who even fright or disturb them, are liable to the punishment of death ? See there," he pursued, as the current brought the body of the monster nearer to the shore ; " see the jewels in its ears, and the golden anklets round its legs. It hath escaped from the sacred enclosure of the temple of Osiris himself. Let us hasten on board ; for the tide will, in all likelihood, carry the carcass to the city, and instant search will be made for the daring

perpetrator of the sacrilege. Nay, who can say but that some spectator may even now have beheld the deed! Ha! the spy! I had forgot! He may yet be loitering near us, though I see him not;" and, as he spoke, he glanced hastily round him in all directions: "But, no matter," he resumed, after a moment's pause, "immediate flight is our only hope in any case!" So saying, he thrust the half-stunned mother on board; and himself and Sivan following, they seized the oars, and began rowing vigorously in the direction of the Nile.

Under other circumstances, Sivan could not have failed to be interested by the remarkable appearance which the face of the country now presented. The flood was at its height, extending in every direction as far as the eye could reach, except where it was bordered on the west by the Libyan mountains, and on the east by the range that lies parallel to the coasts of the Red Sea. Here and there, villages, each containing its small cluster of houses, or the villa of some wealthy proprietor, rose like an islet from the surface of the inundation; and, occasionally, a populous city, with its temples and obelisks glittering in the rays of the sun—the whole appearing to a lively imagination like the work of enchantment, as though the sea-nymphs had built themselves these palaces on the bosom of the waters, where they might sport and revel in the bright Egyptian sunshine. But his mind was too much occupied by the sad events arising out of the occurrences of the past day, to pay any heed to the objects around him. All three, indeed, had their own melancholy thoughts, which indisposed them even to hold converse with one another. Phares's dis-

quietude was partly caused by grief for the loss of the child, and partly by apprehensions as to what might be the consequence of Arsames's rashness. Meroe sat in a stupor of misery, scarcely realizing the terrible bereavement that had fallen upon her, and half believing that what had passed was a hideous dream. Sivan, on the other hand, though deeply distressed at the fate of his infant, was so lost in amazement at the demeanour of Phares, and the words he had let fall, that these continued to be the main subject of his reflections. He had been aware that various animals were carefully tended, and regarded with peculiar reverence by the priests of Isis and Osiris in the town of Arsinoe, near which their house was situated ; and he had supposed that, being viewed as symbolical of certain divine attributes, they were held sacred, just as the stones that composed the altar, or the emblematic paintings with which the walls of the temple were covered, would be so accounted. But that they should be allowed to injure men's property, nay, destroy human life itself, and that it should be unlawful to interfere to protect or punish, seemed incredible. Yet such was clearly the meaning of Phares's words. Again, what was he to think of his remarks, uttered during the interview with the Greek, respecting the administration of the law ? Had he not implied that when weighed against great rank or influence, it was in effect a dead letter ? He felt the whole fabric of his faith tottering under him ; and longed for some further conversation with the old man, which might satisfy him that his present doubts and fears were unfounded.

They rowed slowly on through the evening and

fore it was the will of Seasak, lord of the upper and lower country, that the governors of the various cities should make careful search after this Arsames and his two companions, and bring them to immediate trial and punishment for the sacrilege that had been committed. Meroe added, that immediately after she had heard the proclamation, she endeavoured to extricate herself from the crowd, but ere she could do so, she caught the eye of a man standing near the herald, who was intently watching her, and in whose features she at once recognized the spy, whom she had so often seen loitering about their premises. She observed him also give some orders to a group of soldiers standing near him; but before these could make their way through the multitude of bystanders, who fortunately interposed between them and herself, she had contrived to effect her escape, and had returned without a moment's delay, concealing herself as much as she could from observation by the way.

Greatly alarmed at these tidings, the three fugitives resolved on immediate flight; and no plan appeared so likely to ensure their escape as that proposed by Phares, that they should return at once to the place where they had deposited their boat, cross the Nile, and making a wide circuit of Thebes, effect their escape either to the desert, or the shores of the Nile beyond Syene. This was no sooner determined on than they proceeded to put it into execution; but it took them several hours to regain the spot where they had disembarked on the previous day. To carry the boat out again from the cavern in which it had been deposited, and replace the various articles which had

been taken out, was also of necessity a work of time; and the morning broke upon them before they had completed their task. At last all was ready, the vessel was launched, Phares and Meroe were already on board, and Sivan had stepped back to make sure that nothing had been left behind, when suddenly the former beheld the helmets and spears of a small party of soldiers glittering in the morning sun as they descended the narrow mountain-path that led from the city. Warned by Meroe's loud cry of alarm, Sivan rushed out of the cavern, and instantly perceived the soldiers, who were not three hundred yards distant. He sprang instantly into the boat, thrust it off from the shore, and seating himself by Phares, who had already grasped his oar, began rowing vigorously across the river. A loud shout was raised, commanding them to return on pain of instant death, and several of their pursuers hurrying to the water-side flung themselves in, and endeavoured to reach the boat by swimming; but the weight of their armour, and the start which the fugitives had obtained, frustrated their purpose, and they were compelled to abandon the pursuit. Meanwhile Sivan and Phares plied their oars with the strength and resolution which imminent danger can alone bestow. They had seen the last of their enemies turn back, and were just beginning to breathe freely, and congratulate themselves on their narrow escape, when Sivan beheld Phares start and fall backwards, and at the same moment a loud shout of exultation was heard from the bank, which they were now fast leaving behind. Sivan raised the old man in his arms, but

as he did so he saw plainly that all human aid was vain. An arrow, discharged by one of the soldiers, had pierced his bosom. With a violent exertion he raised himself for a moment, and then fell back, a corpse, into the arms of his companion.

CHAPTER V.

Freedom has a thousand charms to show
That slaves howe'er contented, never know.
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away.
Slaves fight for what were better cast away,
The chain that binds them, and the tyrant's sway.
But they that fight for freedom, undertake
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake.
Religion, virtue, truth ; whate'er we call
A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.

COWPER.

SIVAN and Meroe were seated under the shade of some date-trees, on a small patch of green turf, kept alive by the waters of a little fountain ; which, bubbling up from its bed of limestone rock, imparted a delicious coolness to the air immediately round it. They both looked sad and weary. Their torn garments and skins burnt to a deep red by the scorching sun, bore witness to the dangers and sufferings they had gone through. For several days after they had succeeded in eluding the pursuit of the soldiers, they had wandered about on the borders of the great Libyan desert, or amid its interminable wastes of sand. It was only at nightfall on the previous day that they had succeeded in reaching the small Oasis, where they were now sheltered, in-

the last stage of exhaustion and hunger. As they now looked round them, there was little to encourage or console them. In every direction stretched the boundless sea of sand, varied only by a few rocky eminences, as bleak and barren as the waste out of which they rose. The dry and heavy air seemed red with heat, and the horizon presented the appearance of innumerable volcanoes uniting their fires in one vast glowing furnace. The deep silence and solitude were oppressive in the extreme. Occasionally a group of ostriches, with their necks outstretched and their short wings expanded, would pass at some distance, and here and there an antelope bounded rapidly by them; but, with these rare exceptions, all nature seemed to be fettered by some gloomy spell, that forbade all life or motion.

Neither spoke. Meroe was bowed down, not only by sorrow and suffering, but by the approach of acute bodily illness. The shock caused by the cruel death of her infant, and the yet more cruel murder of her father, had told with terrible effect on a constitution that was not naturally very strong; and the fatigue and privations of the last week had much increased the evil. Probably she had been only enabled to bear up thus far by the excitement and necessity for continued exertion; and now that a temporary respite had been obtained, the reaction had come upon her with overwhelming force. Sivan, on his part, was so deeply wrapped in thought, that he did not notice the increasing illness, which else could not have escaped him. His heart was full of bitterness. This divine gift of law and order, on which his fancy had rested so proudly; which was to raise man from the slough of his passions, and develop all that was noble in his

nature,—what a cheat, what a delusion it was ! Not only had he sustained deeper wrongs, whilst dwelling in a land subjected to its control, than ever he had experienced during the whole three centuries of his previous existence ; but it was even through its agency that his chief sufferings had been inflicted. Elsewhere he might have been oppressed and compelled to fly ; but only in a land where law existed, could he have been doomed to death, without hope or appeal, for such a deed as that which had brought him into his present peril ; and only in a land where a system of organized government had been established, could he have been hunted out with such marvellous dexterity and success, after a flight of so many hundred miles from the presence of his enemy. Phares was indeed right. Human law was nothing, save an instrument of oppression, when balanced against human wickedness clothed with authority and armed with power. To what purpose would it have been to plead the agonized feelings of a parent, which had caused him to avenge the death of his infant on the monster who had slain it, before the tribunal of a monarch who desired his destruction, and could avail himself of the handle which the law afforded him to effect it, without even the semblance of injustice ? To what purpose, again, had Phares been allowed to obtain a righteous verdict against the queen of Egypt, if he were made to expiate with his own life the crime of having fearlessly declared the truth—and expiate it, too, with perfect impunity to the oppressor ? Was it not a mockery to call this justice ? Might not Phares as well have perished by the hand of an assassin, as by the sen-

tence of the merciless and unrighteous power that called itself government?

He sate long in moody abstraction, until he was roused by Meroe, who was obliged to tell him that she feared a severe attack of illness was coming on her. Sivan started, and with a blush of self-reproach for his forgetfulness, began to do his best to atone for it. He tore down some branches from the more distant parts of the Oasis, and wove them into an arbour to shelter her from the intolerable heat. He brought some water in a wooden drinking-cup, which they had carried with them throughout their wanderings, and moistened her parched lips and forehead. Lastly, he gathered a few berries and dates from the nearest trees to relieve her hunger. But Meroe could not eat. Her dry tongue and burning skin, together with the blood rushing rapidly through her veins, showed too surely the approach of fever: and before night delirium came on. Her husband sat by her side, vainly endeavouring to alleviate her sufferings, and listening sadly to the torrent of incoherent words which she poured forth. At one time she fancied herself to be standing before the tribunal of Sesak, pleading earnestly for Arsames's pardon; at another, to be once more looking upon the agonizing death of her child; and then, again, to be staunching the wound from which her father's life-blood was welling. Her wild shrieks woke the sullen echoes of the desert, and contrasted strangely with its dreary and everlasting stillness. Sivan saw that the hand of death was upon her; but it caused him neither alarm nor sorrow to perceive it. It was the happiest solution which his fancy could

suggest of the present problem of their existence. As soon as life was extinct, he would scoop her a grave in the sand; and then, stretching himself beside her, break the bough which he had always carefully treasured in his bosom, and so pass for ever from human existence.

The night wore slowly on; and at last the day broke, gloomy and lowering, over the distant sand-hills. Meroe lay in a stupor of exhaustion, the reaction of the convulsive struggles which had distracted her during the earlier hours of the night. Suddenly she started again into consciousness. She fixed her eyes on a distant quarter of the horizon, and exclaiming, "Fly, my Arsames, they are coming!" dropped into his arms. Sivan bent over her, flung water on her face, and endeavoured, by every means in his power, to restore animation. But his efforts were vain; and he soon became aware that the spirit had passed away. He knelt awhile at her side, and kissed the cold lips which had so often responded to his caresses. Then the sense of his own approaching death came with a deep and solemn calm over him. He rose, and once more taking the wooden cup, began hollowing out a grave in the moist sand that lay nearest to the spring. The sun rose higher as the day advanced, and poured down its burning rays with a heat that seemed as if it would wither and consume him like dried grass in the furnace: but he felt it not. A huge serpent, that had crept forth from the densest cover of the thicket, lay partly coiled round a neighbouring palm-tree, uncertain whether it should spring upon him; but Sivan was unconscious of its presence. He completed his task, and was just turning away to fetch the body,

when a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a voice exclaimed in his ear, “Is it thou, **Arsames?** welcome then, my friend, and brother in misfortune.”

Sivan sprang to his feet. He turned his eye on the speaker, and recognized at a glance the Greek, whose friendly warning had first prompted their flight; though his apparel was even more soiled than his own by the hardships he had lately gone through. He was so overpowered with amazement that he could not return his greeting. The stranger read his feelings. “Thou mayest well be surprised, good **Arsames,**” he said, “to behold me here: but know that I am a fugitive, like thyself, from the wrath of Sesak. That villain spy it seemeth, or one of his agents, beheld me, on my return from thy house to **Arsinoe**, and brought intelligence of the fact forthwith to the king of Egypt. On hearing of thy flight, ere the slaughter of the crocodile was known, he sent for me and bitterly reproached me with my betrayal of the rights of hospitality, as he termed it. I answered free and bold, as becometh an Athenian, in whose eyes kings are but as other men; and we parted in mutual displeasure. Not many days since, a messenger arrived, bearing the news of the death of Phares by an arrow, as he was endeavouring to cross the flood. It chanced that I was again present when the tidings were received; for I had gone to demand from Sesak permission to quit his dominions. I saw the ferocious delight that gleamed in his eye as he heard the tidings, and my indignation burst forth without restraint or measure. It was not wise on my part; yet will it advantage the tyrant to have heard, if only for once, the language and sentiments of a freeman. He said little in reply;

but I read his heart: and no sooner had I quitted his presence than I mounted my horse, and rode southwards at speed, until his limbs could bear him no further. I then dismounted and continued my journey on foot, intending to make for one of these Oases in the desert; which, as thou perhaps mayest not know, are at intervals traversed by merchants, who trade between the Phœnician city of Utica and the chief marts of the *Aethiopians* and Nubians. I had some hope that I might somewhere meet with thee, O Ar-sames, and thy wife, who were generally believed to have effected your escape. All will now be well. Doubtless ere long we shall be visited by one of these trains of merchants who will permit us to journey in their company to the sea-coast, from whence we may take shipping for Greece. But, tell me, is thy wife here with thee, and hath she, thinkest thou, strength to support so lengthy a journey?"

"She is here," said Sivan sadly; "she lieth yonder: but she will never accompany me more on any journey, save that which leadeth to the land of departed souls! Sorrow and hardship have slain her, and my only hope is soon to follow her!"

The Greek's noble face was clouded with sadness. "Is it so," he said, "my friend; and is this hollow trench that thou hast dug, intended for her final resting-place? Suffer me, then, to aid thee in rendering the last offices of love."

Sivan wrung his hand. Wearied of life as he was, he felt the sweetness of human sympathy. He felt too that his purpose of breaking the bough must be postponed awhile, until the safe departure of the stranger had been secured. It would be but a poor requital of

the generous sacrifices which the other, freely and unasked, had made in his behalf, to leave him alone and unaided to encounter the perils of the wilderness. They raised the body between them, and laying it in the hollow that Sivan had made, heaped the sand over it again, marking the spot by a few green boughs laid upon it: and for the remainder of the day, the new comer with thoughtful kindness, left him to commune with his sorrow alone.

For the next few days little conversation passed between the two friends, as they might now be called. They would sit silent for hours together on the turf by the margin of the fountain, each busied with his own subjects of reflection. At length one day the Greek besought Sivan, if he did not find it too painful to his feelings, to relate to him the history of his flight from his house near Arsinoe, up to the time of their meeting at the present spot. Sivan at once complied, and felt even a mournful pleasure in recalling the past; dwelling much as he proceeded, on the delusiveness of the trust he had so confidently placed in the laws and institutions of Egypt, as safeguards of the peace and happiness of the people who dwelt under their protection.

The Greek listened to his remarks on this subject with evident delight. "Brave spirit," he exclaimed, "thou shouldst have been born a Greek. Thy bearing is too noble, thy thoughts too free, thy soul too lofty for this land of crouching slaves and gloomy fanatics. Thou sighest for freedom of action and independence of thought, in a country where man is trodden down by the heel of a despot, and his spirit debased by vile and despicable superstition. Were thou and I

afar from this hateful soil, treading the breezy side of Hymettus, or the olive-bordered banks of Ilissus, we should breathe an air, in which thou mightest give free vent to the thoughts that stir within thee !

“ Listen to me ; for though by a fatal chance, I have been for years an exile from the fair land that gave me birth, and scarce know whether even now I may be permitted to return to it, yet will Athens ever be, in life or death, first in my thoughts. Listen to me, and I will impart to thee a tale, which will, as I well divine, awaken thy sympathy and admiration.

“ I am called Medon, the son of Melantus, the son of Medon, the son of Codrus. My great-grandsire was the last that held kingly rule in my native city. Thou shalt hear how it fell that he was the last. In the twentieth year of his reign it chanced that a numerous and formidable army invaded our territory. Codrus sent to ask counsel of the Deity at Delphi how he should best meet the great danger wherewith his native land was threatened. The reply informed him that that army should prevail in the contest, whose king should be first slain by the enemy. Codrus was then in the prime of his years, great and prosperous, honoured and beloved. It was hard to part with life which offered so many sweets to his lip, and wove so many garlands for his brow. Wealth, honour, undisputed rule, were all his own to enjoy, as well as the richer blessings of private friendship, and the sweeter ties of domestic affection. Yet he renounced them all for the sake of his people, without a murmur or a doubt. He disguised himself as a peasant, sought the hostile camp, provoked a quarrel with the first enemy he encountered, and died ob-

securely, but most nobly, by the hand of a private soldier. The flight of the enemy and the deliverance of his native land were his only reward!"

"Noble, indeed," exclaimed Sivan enthusiastically, half forgetting the sorrow that hung over him. "Thou needest not add why he was the last king of that land! Who would venture to mount the throne on which such a hero had sat, or profane by his grasp the sceptre which that hand had swayed?"

"Thou sayest well," said Medon. "It was resolved that none should thenceforth bear the title or exercise the authority of king, to which he had attached so sacred a remembrance. But his son, my grandsire, became chief magistrate of Athens under the name of Archon, and the same form of government still subsists among us. Such was the love that an Athenian ruler bore to his people. Yet, though I account my native city as the first among the nations of Hellas, in respect of freedom and enlightenment, yet these are not confined to her alone. I could tell thee tales, as stirring as that of my great ancestor, of the self-sacrifice and devotion to the good of their countrymen, exhibited by members of many another community. It was not long since that I encountered in Memphis, a native of Sparta, which is accounted in Greece the rival city to Athens, by name Lycurgus. He had been for many years the most eminent and powerful citizen of his country. Much of his life had been spent in constructing a system of laws for her government; of which as I learn from his companions, the divine voice itself hath expressed its approval. I further learned that he had bound his fellow-citizens by an oath, to observe these laws until he should return from

his foreign travel to release them from it; but it was his intention, they said, never to return to Sparta again, but to live and die in voluntary exile from the land he loved so dearly, that so the oath of his countrymen to obey his laws, might last for ever."

Sivan's eyes sparkled, almost with their former fire. "I must see the nation," said he, "that rears such heroes! and yet," he added thoughtfully after a minute's pause, for the recollection of the disappointment he had already experienced, recurred to him, and somewhat damped his ardour, "what security have ye, after all, that your rulers shall not abuse their power? I do not doubt that the sway of the wise and virtuous, such as thou hast described, would be an inestimable blessing to mankind—yea, the realization of one of my brightest hopes. But who can ensure that none but such as they, shall hold rule among men; and how are they to be restrained, if they should be tempted to step aside from justice, to exercise oppression and wrong?"

"How," exclaimed the Greek impetuously, "how? askest thou what would restrain an Athenian ruler from playing the tyrant and oppressor? By Pallas, I answer, the free spirit of the people! We allow not the man, but the law to rule. To that we pay ready and willing deference. But let those who are charged with the administration of that law attempt themselves to violate it, or warp it to their own private ends, and their power would not outlive the day that witnessed its abuse. Trust me there is little fear that a magistrate among us would attempt, under the cloak of law, to injure any citizen, as thou, O Arsames, hast been injured; even should

he secretly desire to do so. For he would raise up, not one enemy by so doing, but myriads!—all who love liberty and hate oppression; and they are the entire people!"

Sivan was again silent. The germ of a new idea, greater and nobler than that which he had learned from the Egyptian traveller on the last night of his former life—which had induced him to ask for the boon of a new existence to behold its realization—began to unfold in his bosom. He caught the first glimpse of that combination of national submission with individual independence, that hearty regard for the general good joined to the jealous guardianship of private rights, which constitutes the principle of free government; and, arising out of it, of the zealous self-devotion, resolved to preserve it unimpaired at every sacrifice, which mankind call patriotism. Every citizen, according to this theory, was not only subject to, but was also the guardian of, the institutions of his country. The maintenance of righteous laws, the security of individual rights, rested not so much on the upright dealing of the ruler and magistrate, as on the universal consent and approval of all—on the knowledge that if injustice should be attempted, ten thousand voices would be raised against it; and, if need were, ten thousand swords drawn to avenge it. There was something in this calm self-regulated strength; this unselfish zeal for the welfare of all, thus made the basis of a nation's government, that impressed deeply the generous heart of Sivan. He said no more on the present occasion, but his mind recurred to it again and again; and many were the questions with which he plied Medon, who on his part was never weary of answering

them. "Thou canst not expect," he said in one of these conversations, in reply to a question as to how far the whole people shared the enlightened and generous sentiments he described, "thou canst not expect that all alike in any community will be brave, noble, and virtuous. But let not that trouble thee. Do not the mountain tops catch the first rays of sunshine, when the valleys are yet in darkness? The progress of Athens in knowledge and virtue, is as certain as the spread of daylight, when the sun hath once begun his course in the eastern heaven. I myself hope, should I be allowed to revisit my native soil, to contribute to its advancement in all that tends to the welfare of a community: for I have seen and studied during my twenty years of exile many things that are wholly unknown to my countrymen, but which it would greatly benefit them to learn. That is one of my fondest and most cherished visions, and I pray the Gods it may one day be realized."

Sivan's heart responded only too readily to his friend's belief, which was in truth the very echo of his own. "I will see this land of heroes," he said to himself, as he sate beneath his favourite palm-tree, near Meroe's grave, "but not now. My heart is too sad with the memory of recent sorrows to commence again a new career of life. A great gulf must intervene to cut me off altogether from these present scenes, which have been so full of disappointment and misery. Besides, it is plain from Medon's conversation, that this noble idea is yet in its infancy, and it will take centuries to ripen it to its maturity. No, I will carry out my first intention of never quitting this Oasis; but so soon as my friend shall

have safely effected his departure, I will lay my being aside, to resume when and where it shall please Divine Wisdom to appoint."

More than two months had now passed, and they were beginning to fear that the supply of food, which the date-trees afforded, would be exhausted before help arrived; when one morning Medon, who regularly at daybreak climbed the highest palm of the little cluster, in the hope that some of those he expected might be in sight, descried at a great distance some small specks; which in the course of a few hours proved to be a long train of camels bearing bales of the merchandize of the *Aethiopian* cities, cinnamon, precious stones, elephants' teeth, and gold-dust, destined, as he learned, for the marts of Utica and Marusia. About noon they reached the Oasis, and prepared to rest there until the evening of the ensuing day. They willingly agreed to the Greek's proposal, that he and his companion should accompany them, on condition of their paying a certain sum in return for their food, and the protection extended to them; and this, the supply of money which Sivan had taken with him when he commenced his flight, and which had never been drawn upon, amply covered. Towards nightfall, on the next day, as they were making their arrangements to depart, Sivan touched his friend's arm, and begged him to step aside with him from the company of the merchants to the most distant point of the Oasis, as he wished to speak with him alone, and for the last time.

"For the last time," said Medon, in astonishment; "how meanest thou? Is not all prepared for our safe journey? Has aught occurred to make

thee distrust these merchants? If so, let me know it at once, that we may stand on our guard."

"Not so, gallant Greek," answered Sivan. "All is prepared for thy escape, and the men seem honest and simple-hearted. But I have to tell thee that which will cause thee sorrow, though it may not be avoided. I purpose not to depart with thee to-morrow, but shall remain in the wilderness."

"And wherefore?" exclaimed the Greek, with increasing wonder. "Dost thou mean to die of hunger, as would assuredly be thy fate, if thou wert to continue here for many days? Or can it be thy intention to return to Egypt, the land of thy cruel wrongs? Trust me, it were madness to dream of it. Known as thou art to so many, as an object of dislike to the king, and as held in abomination by the priests for what they account thy sacrilegious impiety, thy life were even more surely forfeited than if thou wert to linger here in the desert. Besides," he continued, seeing that Sivan showed no symptoms of yielding, "wouldst thou grieve the heart of thy friend, to whom thy soul is bound, by bequeathing him the recollection that he left thee to perish alone and unfriended? Or, once more, wilt thou abandon the prospect that hath of late given thee so much delight, of visiting my native shores, and beholding with thine own eyes the freedom and happiness which it delights thee so much to hear of?"

"No, my friend," replied Sivan. "I purpose neither to continue here, nor to return to Egypt. Make thy mind easy respecting me, and assure thyself, when thou art far away, that I am well and

prosperous. And for the glorious land, of which it is thy privilege to be a son, believe me I shall yet visit it when the fitting time arrives ; yea, and it may be granted to me to see things, which thy eyes will never be permitted to look on. I may not explain myself further ; but trust me, though my words may sound mysterious, there is a real meaning and purpose in them."

Medon, who discerned nothing in his companion's speech but a desire to reconcile him to the notion of leaving him behind, urged and entreated, but in vain. Finding that Sivan continued immovable, he consented at last to depart alone, assuring him, however, that he would prevail on the merchants to delay for several hours on the ensuing day, in order that he might overtake them if, as he fully expected, his purpose should change.

A shout was now heard requiring the immediate presence of the strangers, if they meant to accompany the party. Sivan and Medon embraced each other for the last time, and then the latter hurried to take his place in the line of march, often looking back and beckoning to his friend, who in reply silently shook his head.

Sivan watched the procession as it advanced slowly over the sandy plain, until it had diminished to a single speck against the red sunset of the sky. Then he stretched himself on the turf, drew forth the bough, and laid it on his bosom. In an instant consciousness had again deserted him.

CHAPTER VI.

Behold

Where on the *Aegean* shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil ;
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits,
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess.
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled note the summer long.

MILTON.

THERE was great alarm and confusion in the streets of Scione, a town of Macedonia of some commercial importance, situated on the western side of the promontory of Pallene. The panic was caused by the unexpected appearance of a detachment of Athenian soldiers, who were descried, about an hour or two before sunset, descending the road that led to the city gates. Ostensibly there was nothing in their arrival to cause alarm, for the Scionæans had long been the fast friends and allies of the Athenians ; and during the whole of the Peloponnesian war, which had now lasted nearly eight years, nothing had transpired to cast a doubt on their fidelity. Nevertheless, many of the leading citizens, who were cognizant of certain secret negotiations lately opened with Brasidas, the

Spartan general now quartered at Amphipolis, felt an uncomfortable misgiving that these might have reached the ears of their allies ; in which case, as they were well aware, their tenure of authority—to say nothing of their lives and property—would be but a brief one.

It was, therefore, with much satisfaction that they heard the commandant of the party announce himself, when challenged at the gate, as Ariston the Athenian, who was escorting some prisoners of rank to Athens, by command of Thucydides, the son of Olorus, the general of the Athenian forces in that district ; and further state, that a vessel had been sent from home, and was already lying in the harbour of Scione, in which he purposed setting sail on the morrow. Reassured by this information, the citizens bestirred themselves with good will to find accommodation for the soldiers and their prisoners ; and while these preparations were in progress, Ariston, having inquired the way which led to the harbour, set out with the purpose of proceeding thither, accompanied only by his nephew, a youth of eighteen or perhaps twenty years of age.

“ And so, my Antiphon,” he said, as they strolled leisurely down the street, “ thou art so full of eagerness again to behold Athens, that the delay even of a single day causeth thee disappointment ? ”

“ Doth that surprise thee ? ” said Antiphon. “ Hast thou not owned that thou art anxious to return thither thyself ? ”

“ True,” said the other ; “ but then I have a wife there, and children and friends. I would fain look again on the face of my Potone, and caress my little Plato, who was but an urchin of three when I left him three years ago. And there are Nicias, and Euripides,

and last, not least, Socrates, who will extend to me the cordial grasp of friendship : while thou—but I forgot,” he resumed, as he glanced at the deep mourning in which the youth was attired ; “ I meant not to remind thee of thy bereavement. Trust me, when we reach Athens, thou shalt find my house thine own, and my friends will soon be thy friends also. What I marvel at is thy excessive desire to behold again a city, of which I think it impossible that thou canst retain the slightest remembrance. It was in the archonship of Antilochides, was it not, that my brother quitted Athens, never, alas ! to return thither ?”

“ Even so,” answered Antiphon, with some embarrassment.

“ And that,” pursued the officer, “ was full eleven years ago. I remember it well. It was the very year in which the sea-fight took place between the Corcyreans and Corinthians, which was the beginning of troubles. Thy father was sent by Pericles on a secret mission to Sitalces ; and he took thee, poor motherless child, with him, little thinking that he would remain twelve long years among these northern barbarians ; still less that he would never behold the violet-crowned city again. Why, thou must have been a mere child then !”

“ Yea,” said the youth, “ scarce eight years of age. But wherefore should that diminish my anxiety to revisit my native city ?”

“ Nay, I know not,” answered Ariston, “ except that thou surely canst recollect but little of that which thou art so eager to behold again.”

“ But, my uncle,” cried Antiphon, “ is not Athens the noblest city the world has ever seen ? Is she not

the birthplace of freedom, the cradle of knowledge and enlightenment, the home of all that is beautiful and great upon earth? Is it any wonder that an Athenian should desire to see once more the glorious land of which it is his birthright to be a citizen; and all the more, if his recollection of it should be dim and imperfect?"

Ariston listened with some surprise, mixed it might be with envy, to the young man's enthusiasm. "Right!" he said aloud. "Thus it becomes an Athenian to feel: and I am glad, my nephew, that thou art thus anxious to revisit thy home, for only in Athens canst thou find teachers qualified to perfect thine education, which hath, I fear, been somewhat neglected. Thou, too, hast this at heart; so at least I have understood."

"Most deeply," replied the youth; "rely on it, if thou wilt furnish me with fitting instructors, they shall not complain of my negligence."

Ariston looked pleased. "Thou art a good lad," he said, "and wilt be worthy of thy race. And let me tell thee, my Antipho, it is worth the while of those who, like us, have the glory to be descendants of the illustrious Codrus, and the scarcely less illustrious Medon, to study the annals of their country, were it only that they might learn how great and wise their forefathers were."

Antipho—or rather Sivan, to give him the name by which he is already known to the reader—started with surprise as he heard these words. A few weeks ago he had found himself once more restored to life; his name, person, and outward circumstances entirely different from those which had heretofore belonged to

him. He found that he had assumed, in some manner inexplicable to himself, the identity of Antipho, an Athenian youth of noble family and ample fortune, which had lately accrued to him by the death of his father Menexenus. Sivan had also become acquainted with Ariston, the uncle of Antipho, an officer in the Athenian army, now operating in Thrace and Macedonia. The latter, who was, as has been already intimated to the reader, about to be despatched homeward with some prisoners of importance, at the time of Menexenus's death, had resolved to take his orphan nephew with him ; the more so as he manifested a most eager desire to accompany him. Sivan, in truth, was full of impatience to behold Athens, the native city of Medon, his former friend, whose glowing eulogies had made so deep an impression on his imagination. It was this thought that had made the chance observation of Ariston so full of interest to him.

"A descendant of Codrus ?" he exclaimed ; "dost thou mean that I am of the lineage of the great Codrus ? And Medon too—didst thou not say Medon ? Tell me who he was, and when did he live, and what acts did he perform ?"

"Who was Medon ?" rejoined Ariston, in at least equal astonishment. "Poor youth, thy education hath indeed been neglected ! Why, even my little Plato could tell thee, I would wager, all about the great-grandson of Codrus, Medon, the son of Melantus, who was compelled to leave Athens in his youth, and dwelt in nearly all the known countries of the world. He would tell thee how he was once the guest of the king of Nineveh, and again of the king of Egypt, and of

the king of Mauritania, and of the king of Tyrus ; and visited other regions which no Greek before his day had ever beheld ; and how he returned after thirty years of absence, and imparted to his countrymen the rich stores of knowledge he had acquired : whereby it is commonly believed that Athens made the great advance in art and science, in which she hath ever continued pre-eminent. Scarce an Athenian boy but has heard of Medon the Traveller, and knows the ancient monument in the Ceramicus, wherein his bones are deposited. But take it not so to heart, my kinsman ! When we are once settled in Athens, which, with the favour of Neptune, will be ere many days have passed, we will find thee masters who will supply thee with the knowledge of that and all other things fitting for thee to learn : and Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus, my dear and honoured friend, shall teach thee that most difficult of all lessons, the practice of virtue. Thou hast heard of him, I trow ?" added Ariston, somewhat sharply ; for he perceived that his companion's attention was still wandering.

Sivan roused himself. " Yes," said he, " I have heard of him, if from none else, at least from thee ; and much shall I rejoice to be the pupil of one so wise and so good as thou dost describe him ! But what is going on by the waterside there, and what means this outcry and tumult ? "

" Some cruelty about to be inflicted on yonder wretched slave, as I judge," answered Ariston. " That ruffian is, as I guess from his speech, a Thracian ; and therefore doubtless as cruel and vindictive as *Allecto* herself. By the twin gods, what barbarians these

notherns are! Let us hasten by them! Their brutality is enough to freeze an Athenian's blood in his veins!

These ejaculations were called forth by a spectacle which presented itself to their eyes, as they turned the corner of the street, and came upon the broad quay abutting on the harbour; to which the town of Scione was indebted mainly for its prosperity and importance. A large galley had just arrived, from which a number of captives were being landed, who were about to be consigned to a slave-dealer and sold by auction in the market-place. It was a sad sight to look at them. They were all, as was evident from their dress, natives of distant lands, Egyptians probably, or Asiatics, to whom the aspect of every thing about them must needs be entirely new and strange; yet their dejected faces did not exhibit the slightest expression of curiosity or surprise. Listless as so many sheep, they followed their conductors from the hold of the vessel to the wharf, and from thence to the house of the slave-merchant, where they were to lodge, until purchasers could be found for them. One alone of the number appeared to retain any spark of the spirit which had once animated him. It had chanced that in landing, as he stepped from the deck on to the wet plank which communicated with the shore, his foot had slipped, and he had stumbled against the owner of the vessel, a huge Thracian, who was standing by, carefully counting the prisoners as they emerged from the vessel. The violence of the shock had precipitated the barbarian into the shallow water, near the edge of the wharf. Covered with mud, and boiling with rage, he had no sooner recovered his feet, than he

snatched from his girdle a huge whip with half-a-dozen lashes, each loaded with balls of lead, and terminated by a hook ; and tearing aside the coarse tunic of the offender, began striking him furiously on the back, accompanying every blow with a volley of unintelligible abuse. The sufferer, a fine powerful man, in the prime of life, with a handsome though melancholy cast of countenance, folded his arms, and endured in silence the torture inflicted on him ; his features expressing no other feeling than that of calm contempt. At length, when his tormentor, stung to greater fury by the impassibility of his victim, spat rudely in his face, the limit of his forbearance seem reached. He snatched the scourge from the hand of the savage, and dealt him a blow with it across the cheeks, which instantly deluged them with blood, and raised several wheals on the flesh ; but a moment afterwards, as if despising himself for this momentary burst of indignation, he flung the whip from him, and resumed his former attitude of indifference. It is impossible to describe the frenzy to which the Thracian was roused by this retaliation. He shouted to his servants to seize the culprit, and lash him fast to a large post, close at hand, to which the cables of the vessels unloading their cargoes were wont to be secured. This order had just been executed as Ariston and his nephew appeared on the scene of action, and the barbarian again brandishing his scourge, was about to lay it with twofold violence on the bare shoulders of the prisoner, when he felt himself caught rudely by the throat from behind, and a loud voice commanded him to forbear.

He turned in great surprise; which was not diminished by perceiving that his assailant was a mere youth, of a slight make, and ordinary stature; as unequal an antagonist to cope with his enormous strength as a Gallic hound to encounter a mountain bull.

“Who art thou,” he exclaimed in a barbarous patois, “that interferest between me and my slave? By the helmet of Ares I will teach thee to thrust thyself into matters which concern thee not;” and as he spoke he aimed a blow which might have prostrated a giant; but the youth avoided it by springing nimbly on one side. Ere the savage could repeat the violence, his eye fell upon the figure of Ariston, who was hastening to interpose; and in an instant his uplifted arm fell motionless by his side.

“Ho, my nephew,” exclaimed the former, “what is this? I had not deemed thee so hot and hasty. I promise thee thy term of life will be but a short one; nay, I will not engage thou wilt live long enough even to see Athens again, as thou so earnestly desirest, if thou thrustest thyself thus into other men’s quarrels! And for thee, barbarian,” he added sternly, turning to the Thracian, “knowest thou against whom thou didst level that blow? By the shade of Theseus, it is well for thee thou didst miss thine aim, or I would have had thy huge limbs nailed to a cross, for daring to strike an Athenian citizen. Ay, thou mayest well looked amazed! Down on thy knees and ask pardon, or thy back shall be beaten with thine own scourge till the bones are bare!”

The Thracian cast a terrified look at the well-known arms and appointment of an Athenian officer;

and the prospect was scarce improved by the presence of two or three heavy-armed soldiers, evidently belonging to his company, who had strolled out in the same direction as their commander. He hastily prostrated himself in the dust before Sivan, and poured forth a string of uncouth and unintelligible phrases, imploring his forgiveness, which half amused and half disgusted his auditor.

"Rise up, man," he said, "I desire not thine excuses. But for this unhappy captive, let me know his price—I desire to purchase him of thee."

The giant rose sullenly and eyed the prisoner, as a wolf-hound might the game which he had been prevented from throttling, and which he longed again to seize in his fangs. "He is a valuable slave," he said, "and I have promised—but," he added, with another glance at the cuirasses and spears of the soldiers, "if thou wilt pay the price he is thine. Fifteen Attic minæ was I to have received for him; but to thee, noble youth—"

"Fifteen Attic minæ, unconscionable villain!" interposed Ariston; "thou must indeed account my kinsman a youth, and, by Hercules, a raw youth too, to ask fifteen minæ of him for a slave, such as I have often seen sold for four!"

"Your pardon, noble sir," said the Thracian; "he is a native of Syria, and hath many accomplishments. I purchased him at Smyrna, whither he had been sent by the king of Persia to be sold, along with all the favourite slaves of the late sovereign. He can read, and write, and play on the harp—"

"Chaffer not with us, barbarian," interrupted Ariston, with true Attic contempt; "and thou, Anti-

pho, if thou must be cumbered with this slave, give ten minæ for him, which must exceed his value, were he as accomplished as Apollo himself! If the man take not that—”

“ Nay, I consent,” said the other hastily, mistaking perhaps the Athenian’s meaning: and in a few minutes the customary forms were gone through, and the money handed over to the Thracian. The little party then dispersed; the slaves and their conductor disappeared round the corner of the street; and Ariston pursued his way in search of the galley that was to convey himself and soldiers to Athens, leaving Sivan and his newly-made purchase alone on the quay.

The latter had remained motionless, and to all appearance unconcerned, during the scene which has just been described, until he heard the proposal of Sivan to purchase him. Then he started, and listened with the deepest interest to the progress of the negotiations: and now he was no sooner left alone with his new master, than, stepping forward, he took his hand and pressed it to his lips, bending his knee to the ground as he did so. There was a native dignity in the action that delighted Sivan.

“ Tell me thy name,” said he, “ that I may henceforth know how to call thee.”

“ I have no name,” was the reply; “ that whereby I was once known among men will never sound on human lips again. Thou heardest yonder wretch say that he accounted me a native of Syria. My designation then, should be Syrus.”

“ Be it so,” said Sivan; “ follow me, Syrus, and let us make preparations for our voyage to-morrow.”

A day or two afterwards, the trireme containing the Spartan prisoners and their escort, safely rounding the dreaded promontories of Caphareus and Geræstus, approached the shores of Attica. Sivan and Ariston were, by the orders of the latter, landed near Brauron; for Ariston's villa, which was situated on the slope of Hymettus, lay but a few miles from the east coast of Attica. They proceeded, therefore, on horseback thither, while the vessel, with the troops and prisoners on board, resumed her voyage for the port of Munychia.

It was about an hour past noon when the travellers, having left their horses, surmounted the eastern ascent of Mount Hymettus, and came in sight of the city which Sivan had so long desired to behold. He stood still, entranced by the beauty of the scene; which, high as his expectations had been raised, yet exceeded all that his fancy had pictured. Beneath him stretched a vast plain, watered by clear and winding rivers, and broken into a rich variety of hill and valley, over which the sun was pouring a flood of brightness, chequering it with alternate light and shade. To the right was seen the wooded slope of Mount Anchesmus, and beyond it the loftier elevation of Pentelicus: to the left extended the range of Ægæos, from whose heights the Persian autocrat had looked down on the discomfiture of his unnumbered multitudes. Between them, and at greater distance, soared the loftier peaks of the Parnesian mountains, clothed in their rich apparel of vineyards and oak forests. Southward, eastward, and westward—a rich border to this lovely picture, lay the blue waters of the Ægæan, in whose calm bosom the white temples and pleasure-

houses were mirrored with such faithfulness, that the eye vainly sought to distinguish between the reality and the reflection. Farther off might be seen countless sails studding the azure surface of the Saronic gulf; with here and there a larger vessel, whose numerous oars produced ripples that danced gaily in the sunshine; and farther still the horizon was bounded by the shadowy mountains of the Peloponnesus and the rocky eminences of the Cyclades. It was a landscape in which nature seemed to have put forth all her powers to charm the eye and satisfy the longing of the heart for beauty: and—rare testimony to the graceful genius of the Greek—the works of human art which mingled with it, did not mar, but rather harmonized with and heightened its attractions.

Ariston seemed pleased with his companion's evident enrapturement, and to some extent to share his enthusiasm. But his admiration was chiefly awakened by the spectacle of the public buildings that rose in stately array in the fore-ground beneath them, and the various localities, each of which was associated with some glorious name or heroic recollection. "Ay," he exclaimed, after an interval of silent contemplation; "it is a glorious sight, is it not, my Antiphon; our violet-crowned city, as the Theban poet hath called it? And it will be yet more glorious in thine eyes, when thou hast become familiar with the spots, that are to every true Athenian as holy ground, consecrated by a thousand undying memories. Let us tarry awhile, that I may point them out to thee. There at our feet rolls old Ilissus with his olive-shaded banks, and there the crystal fountain of Callirhoe. See that line of battle-

mented wall. It is the same that was built by the renowned Themistocles, and against it no enemy hath ever reared mound or planted battering ram. To the left, behold the long walls connecting the city with the harbours of Piræus and Phalerum. They are a gift bestowed by the genius of the immortal Pericles on his country. See again at our feet, scarce a bow-shot within the walls, the Temple of Jupiter the Olympian —there the Odeium, and there the Theatre of Bacchus, where Sophocles and Euripides have won their laurel crowns. That eminence on the left, over which the city wall passes, is the Museum ; and that to the right of it, the Areopagus, at the very name of which guilt trembles and shrinks abashed. Between them, that massive and somewhat rude building, is the Pnyx. Its ancient walls have witnessed the gatherings of the brave and free for many an age past, and have rung to the eloquence of Miltiades and Themistocles, of Pericles and of Cimon. Beyond the further walls, see the Ceramicus, where the ashes of unnumbered heroes are deposited ; thy favourite Medon among the rest : and still beyond it, on the borders of the Cephisus, the shady gardens of Academus, whither thy future teacher Socrates and his pupils are wont to resort. And there—there in the centre of the city—the crowning glory of the scene—behold the rock of the Acropolis with its diadem of temples ; and, rising above all, the unrivalled Parthenon, through whose pillars thou mayest even at this distance discern the masterwork of Phidias, which has made our city the pride and marvel of the whole world ! ”

As Ariston continued to run on in this manner, Sivan hung on his words with at least equal interest

and delight. Almost every place that he named—the Ilissus, the fountain of Callirrhoe, the mounts of the Areopagus and the Acropolis, the Cephisus, the Ceramicus, all were familiar to him from the conversations he had so often held with Medon in that well-remembered spot beneath the palm-trees of the Oasis, with the silver fountain dancing at his side, and the grave of Meroe at his feet. But his heart was too full for speech; and he was glad when Ariston, starting from his momentary enthusiasm, to which he was in sooth but little addicted, remembered the wife and child who were awaiting him at home, and turned away, bidding his young kinsman follow at his leisure. Sivan seated himself on a fragment of stone, and again and again perused every feature of a scene, endeared alike by the memories, and the hopes which it called up. His eye wandered from rugged crag to softly-wooded slope; from the purple mountains in the far distance, to the towers and temples standing boldly in the foreground; esteeming each object on which it rested more lovely than all it had before beheld. But it always returned to that garden-like place of burial, in which as Ariston had said, the mortal remains of his friend reposed. “Verily, O Medon,” he said, as he rose at length to leave the spot, “thou hast not overstated the beauty of thy native city. May all thy other promises have as complete a fulfilment!”

CHAPTER VII.

Such thoughts, the wreck of Paradise,
Thro' many a dreary age,
Upbore whate'er of good and wise
Yet lived in bard or sage.
They mark'd what agonizing throes
Shook the great mother's womb ;
But reason's spells might not disclose
The gracious birth to come.

KEBLE.

AND so the first sight of Athens hath not disappointed thee, Antipho ?" said Ariston, as they descended the slope of the mountain on the afternoon of the day following. " Well, that is no slight praise for it, considering how loftily thine expectations were pitched. Thou art now about to see the interior of our city, and learn somewhat of her citizens and their doings. Pray Heaven thou mayest not be disappointed there either !"

There was a slight satire in the tone, at least so it struck Sivan, that jarred unpleasantly on his ears. " I do so pray," he said gravely, " nor know I any cause why my prayer should not be fulfilled. But tell me," he continued, after a moment's pause, as if anxious to change the conversation, " whither dost thou propose taking me to-day. Are we to visit

Socrates first, or to inspect the house which has now become mine, or to seek for the tomb of Medon in the Ceramicus, as thou didst promise me last night?"

"We must go to Socrates first," said Ariston, "or he will have left the Academy ere we reach it; and then thou mayest search for the tomb thou art so eager to find, and visit thy house at thy leisure. I would willingly accompany thee, but I must deliver the letters wherewith I was charged by Thucydides, and make my report to the Prytanes to-day. But thy slave Syrus is already established at thine house, and Plato will accompany thee, and show thee the way, if thou hast forgotten it. Here, Plato," he called to a boy of six years old, who was loitering behind, attracted by the beauty of some wild flowers by the road-side, "thou must show thy cousin the tomb of Medon in the Ceramicus; and his own house, which he has almost forgotten, near the Gymnasium. But first, we are going to see thine old acquaintance Socrates. How wilt thou like to visit him again?

The boy paused a moment, and then replied, "Socrates is good-natured and kind to boys; but—but I do not think I like him very much."

"And why not, my little kinsman?" said Sivan good-humouredly. "Do you not like good-natured people, who are kind to little boys?"

"Why, yes," said Plato, "I suppose so. But then, he is so shabbily dressed, my nurse Callista says; and Niceratus and Thrasyllus, my schoolfellows, say he is like the statue of Silenus in the Agora; and, besides, he is so—so very—"

"So very what?" asked Ariston.

"So very ugly," said the boy, colouring; for he

doubted whether he would not be reproved for speaking his mind so freely of his father's friend. But Ariston only smiled ; and, laying his hand on his son's head, remarked, " When thou art older, my boy, thou wilt learn truer notions of the noble and the beautiful, I trow, than thy nurse and playmates have taught thee. But come, we are now about to enter the city. Thou must keep close at my side, or we shall lose thee."

They crossed the Ilissus, and, passing through the Itonian gate, entered the eastern quarter of the town. As they proceeded slowly through the streets, Sivan looked eagerly about him, charmed alike with the novelty of the scene, and the crowd of associations, which each object pointed out to him by his kinsman called up. Here, too, he found confirmation of Medon's praises of his countrymen. It was not so much the exquisite grace and symmetry of the temples, whose shafts of pure white stone rose against the rich blue of the sky in loveliest contrast ; nor the principal thoroughfares lined with marble statues, on every limb and feature of which thought and genius had impressed their immortality—it was not so much these, striking and beautiful as they were, that awoke his enthusiasm, as the contrast between the public buildings and private dwelling houses ; the former all grandeur and magnificence, the latter plain by comparison and insignificant ; declaring more forcibly than words could express, how great was the regard felt by all for the general welfare, in preference to the private advantage of each citizen. So again, though it was impossible to tread the streets of Athens, and not be struck with the intellectual countenances and noble

proportions of the citizens that thronged her highways, yet this was less admirable in his eyes than the free, fearless look which sat on every face, and told, to his fancy at least, of inborn worth and nobleness of soul. The whole city bore as different an aspect to that of the Egyptian capital, as it was possible to conceive. That had been characterized by dark and sombre magnificence; here all was light, freshness, and freedom; a type, as his heart whispered him, of the different spirit by which the inhabitants of the two cities were animated.

They proceeded slowly through the streets, and passing between the Areopagus and the Pnyx, and leaving Mount Lycabettus to the left, quitted the city by the gate called Hippades. A short walk along the banks of the Cephisus brought them to the entrance of the Academy, and immediately afterwards Ariston exclaimed joyfully, "I see them; it is even as I expected."

Sivan started from the reverie in which he had been indulging. He saw before him a spacious garden, or rather pleasure, planted with plane-trees and olives, and adorned with statues and altars of white marble. The afternoon sun, which had poured down with oppressive heat on the more exposed parts of Athens and its environs, was here tempered to a genial warmth, the slanting rays chequering the green turf with pleasant variations of light and shade, and bringing out the marble decorations in broader contrast with the foliage in which they were embowered. In an arbour, constructed beneath the shade of some ancient olive-trees, which sheltered it on every side, excepting that which lay open

to the cool north, was collected a group of figures, some standing, some reclining, round a man who was seated on a stone bench, at the foot of the largest tree. A remarkable difference might be observed between him and the others present. The latter were all in the spring or early summer of life, and belonged to the noblest families of Athens. The latter fact was clearly intimated, not only by their close-fitting tunics of the finest wool and the gayest colours, their embroidered girdles secured by jewelled clasps, and the golden grasshoppers that some of them wore in their hair—a fashion then fast disappearing—but still more by the air of high breeding and intelligence, which characterizes the better born and educated in every land. But the central figure was in all respects unlike his companions. He was, if not advanced in years, certainly past middle life; and his dress consisted of a single garment, which, though scrupulously clean, was of the plainest materials, and devoid of the least appearance of ornament; while his head and feet were entirely uncovered. His features also presented an almost whimsical contrast to the handsome and aristocratic faces of the youths with whom he was conversing. His forehead was low, and his features plain and uninteresting, almost to grotesqueness. The mouth and chin even conveyed the notion of coarse sensuality, and the whole aspect forcibly reminded those who beheld him of the conceit already suggested, that the philosopher greatly resembled Silenus, the grossest of all the heathen deities. Altogether he was as unlike what Sivan had pictured to his own fancy as it was possible to imagine. But this unfavourable impres-

sion only lasted while he continued silent. The moment his attention was roused by any remark made to him, still more when he addressed one to any of his auditors, the expression of thought and sweetness that played round his features, effected a transformation so marvellous, that you could hardly believe it was the same person whom you had been watching a minute before. A conversation, which seemed greatly to interest the company generally, was proceeding when Ariston and Antipho joined them, and their arrival was in consequence unnoticed.

“And so, good Agatho,” said the philosopher, “it seems that thou wouldest ostracize all those who do not account of me as thou dost, and drive them into banishment among the Scythians or the *Aethiopians*, who feed on human flesh, or I know not what more barbarous and unheard-of nation there may exist on the farthest confines of the earth.”

“Nay, O Socrates!” replied the youth, “I would but that such were banished from the city; as thou, too, wouldest approve, were the person calumniated any one but thyself. By the Twelve Gods, should it not move the indignation of any just man to hear the mountebank Aristophanes inciting the people, whom he leads astray with his buffooneries, to believe that thou dost instruct thy disciples how to lie and to cheat most skilfully,—thou, the teacher of the true, the upright, and the beautiful?”

“Thou art right in some measure,” said a man, who might be five or six years older. “I do not, indeed, account the son of Philippus a mountebank, for I deem him to have a deep-laid purpose in the lampoons and innuendos wherewith he assails those

whom he loves not; but I hold him to be no true friend to the people whom he professes to serve. Yet is he less odious in my eyes than his parasites, who have his malignity without his wit. Knowest thou, O excellent Socrates, one Lampo, the son of Demades? Ah! I see thou dost. Well, what thinkest thou that wretched babbler scrupled not to affirm of thee but yesterday in the ox-market?"

"Nay, I know not, my *Æschines*," answered the philosopher, with a quiet smile; "nor can I guess it any more than my little friend Plato here, whom I rejoice to see, as also his noble father, whose return I heard of this morning. But proceed," he said, after greetings had been exchanged between Ariston and himself, "what said Lampo, the son of Demades?"

"He said," rejoined *Æschines*, "that he knew, nay, that he had himself heard thee assure one of thy disciples—whom, however, he could not, or would not name—that it was unwise, yea, by Jupiter, the part of a madman, to offer up prayers to the Ever-blessed Gods! and that whosoever should do so, must look to suffer many and grievous calamities."

Socrates again smiled. "It seemeth to me," said he, "that our friend Lampo must have been present, though we saw him not, at a conversation I had not many weeks since with Alcibiades, near the temple of Jupiter the Olympian. Alcibiades is not one of our party to-day, if I mistake not;" and as he spoke, he glanced round the circle.

"No," said a youth, with a handsome, though dark and rather sullen countenance, whose name was Critias, "he is not here to-day; he hath gone to inspect a new chariot, which he hath just purchased, wherein he pro-

poses to contend at the Olympian games. It is, as I hear, the work of a Corinthian craftsman of great renown, and men speak of it as a miracle of art; but, by Hercules, the price is such as none but Alcibiades or Plutus would think of paying! A talent of gold, I am told, was the sum demanded; but Alcibiades, whose delight is to astonish all mankind, amazed the artist by offering half as much again as he had asked."

"Another chariot!" exclaimed Agatho, "and for the Olympian games? Why, to my certain knowledge, he hath six chariots entered for the race already."

"Like enough," said Æschines; "but that were, with the son of Clinias, an additional reason why he should enter a seventh."

"Seven chariots for the Olympian games!" said Ariston. "By Pallas, thy pupil, O Socrates, has made good use of the three years during which I have been absent from Athens! He was then thy favourite disciple, and ever at thy side. I remember hearing him make his first speech in public but a few days before I sailed. Seven chariots, saidst thou? Methinks he did not learn that extravagance from thee! But what wert thou saying respecting him?"

"I was but regretting his absence to-day," said Socrates, a little sadly, for he felt that his hold over his brilliant but unstable pupil was rapidly failing, "since he could have told us more accurately than I can, what passed on the occasion to which, I conclude, Lampo refers. But tell me, my Æschines, dost thou deem it right and fitting when thou desirest a thing very earnestly to entreat the Gods to bestow it on thee?"

"Surely, O Socrates, no one can doubt it!"

"And thou askest it of the Gods, because thou thinkest that they are willing to help thee, as well as able to do so?"

"Even so," said Æschines.

"But tell me, again, dost thou, on thy part, also know what is good for thyself to receive? Have not many men prayed for things, which being granted, have proved most pernicious to them; as, for instance, Midas, the son of Gordius, and Gyges the Lydian, who, obtaining their petitions, suffered therefrom great loss, nay, by Jupiter, entire destruction? Tell me, if thou knewst that what thou didst ask for would bring on thee the same injuries that their petitions did on them, wouldest thou still entreat that thy wishes might be gratified?"

"How canst thou ask such a question?" said Æschines. "Surely, none but a madman would do so. I ask but for things, which I expect will be advantageous to me."

"And yet," pursued the philosopher, "did not Gyges and Midas believe that the gifts they prayed for would be to their benefit?"

"I suppose so," said Æschines, "or they would not have asked for them."

"Men cannot tell, then, whether those things which they petition the Ever-blessed Ones to give them, will in their issue prove hurtful or profitable to them?"

"They cannot, O Socrates! seeing that the issue is still hidden in the womb of the future."

"Nay, then, my friend," said Socrates, "if the Gods are already disposed to bestow all manner of good things upon thee, and they can also foresee what

would be to thy advantage, and thou on the other hand canst not, were it not better to leave them to benefit thee according to their own wise pleasure, rather than by offering up thy petitions, to assume to thyself, as it were, the direction of that which thou understandest not; and so forego advantages which thou mightest have received, and incur calamities thou mightest have escaped?"

Æschines was silent; but another youth nearly of the same age, whose countenance was full of intelligence and benevolent expression, took up the conversation. "Surely," said he, "O Socrates, thou dost not mean that a man should not offer up prayer to the Blessed Ones! How could we reconcile that with what thou didst tell Euthydemus not many days since, that it was right to reverence the Deity by sacrifices and prayers, in that manner which the laws of the country wherein each man dwelleth may prescribe—or with thine own daily practice which is in strict conformity with this rule? How may this be, that we are to worship, yet to forbear from worship; to pray, yet to abstain from prayer?"

"It is indeed a difficult question, my Xenophon," said Socrates, "yet let us examine it more attentively. Was it not said that we had better desist from praying, because we knew not what would be good for us to petition for?"

"It was," said Xenophon.

"But are we thus ignorant as to what may be the effect of all things that a man may receive, or only of some? Thus, for instance, do we not know that virtue is better than vice, and knowledge than ignorance, and content than disquietude of mind?"

"It is true, we do know these things."

"It must be better for us, then, to acquire virtue rather than vice, and knowledge than ignorance, and truth than falsehood?"

"Certainly."

"Then, since we know that it must be good for us to receive these things, we need not fear to entreat the Gods to give them to us?"

"It appears reasonable to think so," said Xenophon.

"But tell me again, my Xenophon, how do we know this? How do we know that truth is better than falsehood, and virtue than vice, and the like?"

"Thou teachest us," replied Xenophon, "that it is by contemplation and study of the divine nature, that we come to know these things; which are indeed written on our souls, but the handwriting being overlaid with dirt and rubbish, the soul hath need to be cleansed and purified by contemplation and self-mastery, so that the writing may be the more clearly discerned."

"Right," said Socrates; "the more then that we learn of the divine nature, the more things shall we know of, that are of a certainty good for man to possess, and which he may safely ask for."

"Even so, as it appears to me," was the answer.

"Such then," said Socrates, "do I account to be the nature of prayer. Whatsoever things we know to be certainly and immutably good we may rightly ask the Blessed One to bestow upon us. They are indeed the same things that the Gods, if they were pleased with us, would bestow upon us, whether we asked them or not; yet doubtless the more for our asking. But to pray for such things as the vulgar petition for, such as riches, or power, or prosperity in

any undertaking, or a life longer than that of other men, or exempt from the ordinary conditions of humanity ; such prayers I account as folly, nay, by Jupiter, as approaching to madness ! ”

Sivan had stood by while this dialogue proceeded, so deeply interested, that he had almost forgotten that his name and person were unknown to the philosopher. But the last remark brought his own peculiar case so directly home to him, and in a light so unfavourable, that he could not remain silent.

“ Pardon me, O wise Socrates,” he said, stepping forward from behind Ariston’s seat ; “ but if the Deity be such as thou describest Him, would He suffer His gifts to be hurtful to those, unto whom He grants them ? Is it not in His power to make a thing profitable or injurious at His pleasure ; and may He not, therefore, make any thing which thou or I may ask for, beneficial rather than hurtful to us ? ”

Socrates looked in some surprise at the youthful speaker : and Ariston hastened to interpose. “ He is my nephew,” he said, “ Antiphon, the son of Menexenus, who yesterday returned to Athens after an absence of many years. It was my purpose in coming hither to-day, to ask thee to admit him among the number of thy disciples ; as he is anxious to make up, so far as he may, for the time he hath lost during his residence among the barbarians of Macedonia and Thrace.”

Socrates bent his head graciously. “ I reject none who are anxious to seek after divine philosophy ; and I doubt not that the son of Menexenus and nephew of Ariston will be an apt pupil. For thy question, noble youth, remember that there are things hurtful in themselves, as excessive pleasure, or success,

which of necessity injure those who receive them ; and other things, which if granted to one man must needs hurt another ; as if it be granted to one man to slay his enemy, it must be destruction to him who is slain. And again have we not already mentioned certain persons, who did receive that which they prayed for ; yet it proved not advantageous, but hurtful to them ? ”

“ But hath not the Deity,” replied Sivan, “ power to cause even what is evil in its own nature to become good to any one, if He so will it ; and so again, if He choose it, to arrange the order of events, that he that slays and he that is slain shall both receive benefit ? And for those of whom thou hast spoken, as Midas and Gyges, might it not be that the fruition of their wishes was injurious to them, because they prayed not in a reverent and submissive spirit ; which if they had done, the obtaining their desires would not have proved their ruin ? ”

Socrates looked at him with increasing interest. “ It may be so,” he said thoughtfully, “ but it seems to me that we know not, as yet, enough of the divine nature to speak certainly of these matters. Even the wisest of men, or they that are called so, know little more than their own ignorance of such things. And until they be more fully enlightened respecting them, it were safest at least to abstain from such prayers as thou speakest of.”

“ It is well said,” remarked Xenophon ; “ but tell me, if such a revelation of the nature of the Gods be needful, whence is it to arise, and who is he that shall instruct mankind therein ; for, as it seems to me, no man is able to do this ? ”

“ I am not able to say,” replied the philosopher,

"for my own part, I nothing doubt that such a revelation will at some future time be bestowed. For as on the one hand, I am persuaded that God is full of love and care for men, and on the other that no gift can be conferred upon them so excellent as that of knowledge of the divine nature, I cannot question but that they will one day be instructed therein : but as regards the time when, or the source whence, the teacher may arise, I am not able to say any thing. But the afternoon is wearing fast away, and it is time that we return to the city. Noble Ariston, I will walk with thee, for there are many things concerning which I would fain make inquiry."

The party slowly dispersed, the youths strolling leisurely, and for the most part in pairs, along the banks of the Cephisus, discussing the topics of the day which afforded the most interest—the new drama of Euripides which was expected to obtain the prize ; the likelihood of Nicias's undergoing ostracism, if Cleon should return victorious from Amphipolis, as he had from Sphacteria ; and the newest tunic, in which Alcibiades had dazzled the eyes of the Athenian citizens.

Sivan, accompanied by his little cousin, proceeded slowly under his guidance in the direction of the Ceramicus. The simple yet profound wisdom to which he had been listening, and especially its bearing on his own case, had awakened a train of thought, which if not wholly new to him, at least had never been directly entertained. Had the request he had preferred on the last evening of his first existence been blindness and folly or even worse, as must be the case if his new teacher was not mistaken in his view ?

He recollect ed the failure of the first experiment to which he had subjected his theory ; could he be sure that he would not have to encounter a yet more bitter disappointment ? He walked on, absorbed in these reflections, until his little companion pulling him by the hem of the tunic to arrest his attention, exclaimed aloud, "Here is the monument you wished to see." A moment afterwards, the child, attracted by a butterfly, or a bird singing in one of the thick coppices with which the garden was planted, ran eagerly off, leaving his kinsman to contemplate the ancient tomb at his leisure.

Long and earnestly did Sivan gaze upon it—the rude yet richly ornamented sarcophagus, one of the earliest specimens, it might be, of a style which Medon himself had first introduced among his countrymen ; the ancient inscription with its obsolete characters, half effaced by the action of the elements, and the wear and tear of more than five centuries ; and the olive and laurel which grew on either side of it—meet emblems, as he thought, of the peaceful and glorious career of him, whose dust they overshadowed. As he continued to linger near the spot, it seemed to his fancy as if a voice from the tomb of his friend had given him an answer to the question, which had been perplexing and troubling him as he approached it. Here was one who had cherished a wish not dissimilar to his own, which had been realized so far as the duration of a single lifetime could behold it realized : and its fulfilment had brought him not disappointment but great and abiding satisfaction. Why should his own hopes prove less substantially founded, or be fraught with a less happy result to himself, than those of

Medon? At least there could be no wisdom in anticipating failure. It would be time enough to lament that, when it had been experienced, if experienced it should be. Meanwhile, all that he had yet seen promised him an opposite result.

He turned away from the sepulchre greatly comforted, and calling the boy who had wandered away to a distant part of the ground, accompanied him to the spacious and handsome house, which had belonged to Menexenus, and now was his own. Here, a few days afterwards, he took up his abode; and commenced his studies under the various masters recommended by Ariston; resorting almost daily to the garden of Academus and other spots, which Socrates and his pupils were wont to frequent, and listening to the deep wisdom that flowed from his lips. He formed also acquaintances with youths of his own age and of the highest rank; for his own birth and fortune enabled him to mix on equal terms with the noblest of Athens. In the course of a year or two, when he had attained the legal age which entitled him to take his part in politics, he became a constant attendant at the public debates in the assembly: while the society of the great men of genius, whose names belong to the history, not of one nation, but of the world; and to which his relationship to Ariston, and friendship with Socrates gave him full access; was a source of never-ending delight. The companionship of Sophocles, Euripides, Polygnotus, and Alcibiades, the warmer and more affectionate intimacy he enjoyed with Socrates, Xenophon, and Agatho, had indeed attractions such as might have dazzled eyes more clear-sighted than those of Sivan, and blinded him for a time at

least to all the evils and defects of a system of things in which these brilliant intellects bore so conspicuous a part. At no time in the history of mankind has literature attained to a purer standard, or eloquence operated with greater power on the general mass, or art and science been carried so near to perfection, as at this era, when the Athenian empire had reached its culminating point. In these employments many years passed away which it is not the object of this tale to record.

CHAPTER VIII.

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun.
On old Ægina's rock, and Ida's isle,
The God of gladness sheds his parting smile,
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve, his palest beam he cast
When, Athens, here thy wisest looked his last.
How watched thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murdered sage's latest day.

BYRON.

It was a dark and stormy night. Notwithstanding the mildness of the season, for summer had already set in, all who were compelled to be abroad wrapped their mantles more closely round them, to protect themselves as well as they could against the bitter wind which, rushing furiously through the gorges of Mount Ægaleos, startled the ear of the wayfarer with sounds which, to his disturbed fancy, resembled the shrieks of human agony and despair. It was a night when few would choose to be abroad, except those who for reasons of their own desired privacy and concealment. Such, at least, appeared to be the object of a small company of men gathered under the shelter of the cliffs that border the bay of Eleusis, at that point

which is nearly opposite the small rocky island called Psyttaleia. It consisted of two groups: the first, almost hidden by the shade of the overhanging crags, was composed of half a dozen stout, hardy fellows, attired as seamen; the other, of two men of middle age, who belonged apparently to the upper ranks of society, and who were conversing eagerly, though in subdued tones, at a little distance. A projecting promontory of rock served at once to shelter them from the wind, and prevent their conversation from being overheard by the sailors. In a small bay close at hand a merchant vessel was lying, also as much concealed from sight as possible, but stored with provisions for a voyage, and prepared for immediately putting to sea, should need be, notwithstanding the stormy wind and the threatening sky.

"And you are certain, are you, Cebes," said the taller of the two who were conversing together, "that Crito saw him yesterday morning, and failed altogether in his endeavours to induce him to hearken to our wishes?"

"Altogether," replied Cebes. "He would hearken to nothing that our friend could advance. It was in vain that Crito talked to him of the sorrow of his disciples, the bereavement of his wife, the injury which his orphaned children would sustain by his death. He even insinuated that it would bring disgrace upon his friends, whom the world would blame for not having laboured successfully to save him. Socrates heard him with that calm smile which we know so well, and in a few words replied to his arguments; assuring him that there was not one of them that had not occurred to him long ago, and had had its due weight with him,

but they could not alter his resolution. His friends have not renewed their solicitations, for they see plainly that they would be useless; and trust me, noble Antipho, thou, too, wilt find them to be offered in vain."

"It may be so," said Sivan; "I fear thou speakest only too truly. But never, until this deed of atrocious wickedness hath been consummated, will I desist from straining every nerve to prevent its perpetration. The very calmness of the venerable victim: his cheerful, or to speak more truly, his triumphant submission, but spur my resolution more keenly. To prevent the extinction of such a light were much; to save this people from so foul a parricide, and its eternal infamy, were yet more."

"And what," rejoined Cebes, "if it be a fair question, do you now purpose to do, for I own I should be quite unable to suggest any thing?"

"Hearken," replied Sivan. "I have bribed the gaoler with a sum so heavy that it will absorb half my patrimony to pay it, on condition of his favouring Socrates's escape. He is to admit myself, and three of the trustiest of my slaves, to his presence to-night. It is well known in Athens that the prisoner has refused every offer of help from his friends, who were anxious to procure a reversal of his sentence, or failing that, to contrive his escape. He is, therefore, but negligently guarded. Should he hearken to my entreaties, as I yet hope, we have a disguise ready wherein to envelope him."

"And if he does not," interrupted Cebes, "as is, I fear, by far the more probable issue, though thou thinkest otherwise,—what then?"

"Blame me, if you will," said Sivan; "but my purpose is to bear him with us, in any case, to yonder ship, which lies ready to hoist her sail at a moment's notice. Be the risk and the shame of the flight mine, if any account it shameful. I am prepared to abide it!"

"How?" said the other in surprise. "Mean you that you would do this in spite of his own wishes and commands; and attempt flight, too, on a night like this? By the Twelve Gods, to do so were but to change one form of death for another, so far as he is concerned, and cast away your own lives into the bargain!"

"Be it so," cried Sivan, "I will encounter both risks; but the latter willingly. Ha, here, I think, comes Syrus! He is the trustiest and most intelligent of my slaves; and I have appointed him, therefore, to watch near the prison for the notice which the gaoler is to give that all is ready. Doubtless he comes to announce the fact."

As he spoke, an elderly man, in the dress of a domestic of the superior class, approached them cautiously from the direction of the city, and in a low voice addressed Sivan.

"Noble master," he said, "the gaoler hath apprised me that the hour originally fixed for our enterprise must be changed, as it cannot be made now with any reasonable hope of success. The return of the sacred vessel has been celebrated, he says, with extraordinary festivities, especially by the enemies of Socrates; and the streets, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, are thronged with noisy revellers, who amuse themselves with stopping all they meet. We must wait until deeper in the night."

Sivan uttered an exclamation of impatience. "The night is already advanced," he said, "and unless to-morrow's dawn shall find us many a mile from these guilty shores, our labour will be vain. Let us at least approach nearer to the city, that not a moment may be lost, when the right time for action shall at length arrive."

The party, consisting of Sivan, Cebes, and two slaves, accordingly moved in silence, and with much caution, in the direction of the south-western gate, concealing themselves among the ruins of the wall which had once guarded the road to the Piræus; but which the vengeance of the victorious Spartan had now levelled in the dust. Syrus returned to his former position; and, after half an hour of protracted suspense, the two friends resumed their conversation.

"And to what place dost thou propose to direct thy flight," said Cebes, "supposing that this attempt of thine should be crowned with better success than I fear it can meet with?"

"I know not," replied Sivan. "My intention is to sail away from this hateful coast; and to-morrow, when it has vanished in the far distance, to ask my revered instructor whither he would wish to be conveyed. His wish will direct me: to Thessaly, or to Sparta, or to Megara near at hand, or distant Asia, or some unknown and unheard-of land; it matters not to me. Let me but save him, and my own future lot will cause me little anxiety."

"And what," pursued his interrogator, "what if your scheme should fail?"

"Then, too, shall I accompany him, and quit, not these shores only, but the society of human-kind for ever. I

am weary of this land of despotic liberty and merciless philanthropy ; where nothing is really free but vice, and no settled principle sways the souls of men but the indulgence of their passions ! Twenty and four years, O Cebes ! have I lived the life of an Athenian citizen ; and each year's experience has torn away more and more completely the mask that veils the hideousness of the idol, before which I once bowed in such reverent adoration. I have formed no ties, save those of friendship ; and of the three who have for all these years been dear to me as my own soul, two already are gone, and the third, and most beloved of all, is about to be taken also. Agatho, but two months since, was laid on his funeral pyre ; Xenophon has been driven by his countrymen into exile ; and Socrates is about to suffer the sentence of death. Should that be executed, there will be nothing left in this land that could bind me to life ! ”

“ I gather not the full meaning of the first part of your speech,” said Cebes. “ I am not, as thou knowest, a citizen of Athens, neither do I profess to justify her acts, nor to bear her any great affection ; but, surely, whatever may be the faults of the Athenian people, they are at least free. How saidst thou, then, that nothing is really free amongst them, excepting vice ? ”

“ Free ! ” cried Sivan indignantly, “ what is the meaning of that word ? Look you, Cebes, in this land, teeming with life and abundance, there are some twenty thousand men, who claim the right of independent thought and action, so they infringe not the laws of the Republic. These, it is true, cannot be wronged or oppressed with impunity, but for every one of these favoured children of fortune may be num-

bered twenty miserable beings, whose bondage is more ignominious and hopeless than that of the beast of burden. The beast is at least permitted to be thankful to the hand that feeds and sustains it, but the slave is forbidden even to bend his knee in worship to his God. No task is too heavy, no office too degrading for them ; not an hour of the day or night, not a word of their lips, scarce a thought of their hearts, is their own. Stripes and starvation, imprisonment, the cruellest indignities, the most ferocious forms of torture and death which ingenuity can devise, may be inflicted upon them, without fear of retribution, almost without fear of censure. They cannot be righted, because they cannot be wronged. Dignity of mind, independence of thought, self-government, glorious liberty, the boasted birthright of the Athenian,—how think you these words sound in their ears ? Are they not to all the inhabitants of this land, save a very few, a hideous and a bitter mockery ?”

Cebes looked with increasing surprise at his companion. “ Slavery is not confined to Attica,” he said, “ nor even to Greece ; nor do our wisest and most enlightened men regard it in the light in which you place it. Even if we allow it to be an evil, it is at least a necessary one ; and if necessary, how is it to be maintained without the most formidable peril to the life and property of every citizen, except by the very severity you so bitterly denounce ?”

“ Slavery is not a necessity,” answered Sivan. “ In this very land, in its purer and better days, it was unknown ; and there are even now countries where all men alike are free. Still less are the cruelties by which it is upheld, necessities. Among many other

nations, the laws do not shield the oppressor, as they do in this pretended home of freedom. The ancient Egyptians, whom we proudly term barbarians, exacted, for the murder of a slave, which we look on with eyes so lenient, the utmost penalty of death. And what are we—unless our judgment be blinded by selfish interest or inveterate prejudice—what are we to think of a country that professes to love and reverence liberty above all human things, which yet habitually justifies its violation of all it declares to be holiest and best, on the plea of necessity? Might not the veriest despot that ever scourged mankind allege the same excuse? Yes, my friend, what can we say of a land of liberty that counts its freemen by hundreds, but its slaves by thousands?"

Cebes would have replied, but Sivan, in the excitement of his awakened feelings, continued without noticing his companion's interruption. "Nor think," he pursued, "that this is the only crime against freedom wherewith I charge this people. How have they ever treated the subject states whom they professed to call allies? Who can forget the sentence pronounced on the hapless Mitylenians, the massacre of Scione, the yet more shocking doom of the gallant Melians? The only crime of which all these were guilty, was the very love of freedom which Athens extols as the source of all that is great and noble. Yet for this very cause did they slaughter in cold blood every grown man of a brave and unoffending nation, who claimed the same origin, spake the same tongue, worshipped with the same worship as themselves; and reduced their wives and children to slavery! Great heaven, when I stood in the Agora, and heard the

horrible massacre legalized by the votes of six thousand citizens, claiming to be the champions of freedom and the pioneers of enlightenment to the human race, I almost expected that the polluted earth would split asunder, and absorb all present in the same universal destruction to which they had doomed the Melians! But for the love I bore to my master and my friends, I had quitted Athens that hour, and for ever!"

At this moment the figure of Syrus, creeping cautiously along under the shadow of the ruins, caught Sivan's eye. The slave soon joined them, bringing them the intelligence that all was at last quiet, and that the gaoler had given the preconcerted signal for their approach. It was arranged that Cebes, who was anxious to learn the issue of the experiment, should await their return at the spot, where he had first appointed to meet Sivan. The other three followed Syrus, who in profound silence retrud the path by which he had joined them, and entered the city by a gate that seemed to have been intentionally left unfastened. The streets were now, as Syrus had reported, quiet and almost deserted; nevertheless, they avoided the public thoroughfares, and pursued their route by narrow and intricate by-ways, with which Syrus appeared to be well acquainted, until they reached the wall of the prison. Here their conductor tapped at a small postern which, silently opening at the summons, admitted the four adventurers, and was again instantly closed. A like signal procured them admission at an inner door; and, in a minute afterwards, Sivan, taking the torch from the hand of the gaoler, stood within the prison of his friend.

Socrates was stretched upon his couch, enjoying the

calm repose that is known to the pure of heart and the guiltless alone ; but his slumbers were light, and the entrance of Sivan instantly awoke him. His first impression evidently was that the morning had already broken, but the sight of the torch, by which the chamber was illuminated, showed him his mistake ; and the moment that his eye lit upon his visitor, he divined the truth.

" Ha, Antipho !" he exclaimed with the unruffled serenity which seemed to increase as the last hours of life wore away, " hast thou come, like so many others, on a fruitless errand ? Wouldest thou too waste thine eloquence in trying to persuade an old man, who has passed sixty years of his life in preaching obedience to the laws of his country, to set an example of breaking them himself ? "

" My best one," said Sivan passionately, " I have come to implore thee to save Socrates to Greece and to the world ! If the sorrow of thy wife, the helpless orphanage of thy children, the despair of the many friends that love thee, cannot move thy resolution, yet, at least, remember thy love of justice. Wilt thou acquiesce in, and lend thyself to the most flagrant act of wickedness that this unhappy people hath yet committed ; a deed which will outdo in atrocity the injustice and ingratitude that they have ever evinced towards their worthiest and best—to Themistocles and Aristides and Cimon—to Phidias and Anaxagoras and Thucydides—and worst of all, to the six gallant generals whom they butchered to gratify the private resentment of their demagogues, for the crime of serving their country too faithfully ? I remember how, on that day of blood and shame, thou thyself, O .

Socrates, didst stand forward alone in the face of the furious multitude, and refuse, at the peril of thine own life, to obey their shameless pleasure. Wilt thou now yield up innocence in thine own person, to gratify the lawless malignity of thine enemies ?”

“ The case is not the same, my Antipho,” replied the philosopher. “ On the day to which thou makest reference, I had my duty to the state to perform, and I refused to overstep it, at the dictation of an angry multitude. Now I have my duty to the state to perform ; now too I cannot overstep it, though at the bidding of my dearest friends. The accused cannot be allowed to pronounce on the justice or injustice of the sentence passed upon him ; or the administration of all law amongst men, would, of necessity, cease.

“ But thou knowest,” urged Sivan, throwing himself, in the eagerness of his entreaty, on his knee before him ; “ thou knowest, in thine inmost heart, that thy sentence is unjust ; nor is it possible that thou canst doubt, that a deed so flagitious as this judicial murder of thee would be, must needs provoke the vengeance of heaven on those who perpetrate it. Remember, then, as a last plea, thy love for thy country ! Wouldst thou, in thy death, bequeath a curse to that land, which thou hast lived, so many years, to bless ?”

“ Even this moves me not,” replied Socrates, with the same calmness as before ; “ nor is thine argument now suggested to me for the first time. The guilt lies not in the accomplishment of the act, but in the deliberate resolve to commit it. My flight would in no way diminish the anger wherewith the Ever-blessed Deity regards injustice ; but it would aggravate the

suspicion with which the multitude look on those who would fain teach them knowledge and virtue; and would add to their present hatred, the yet more fatal feeling of contempt."

Sivan rose and was silent for a space. "It must be so," he said at length, with a deep sigh. "I had fully resolved, in the agony of my sorrow at the thought of losing thee, that thou shouldest fly with me from this prison and country—if not willingly, yet against thy will. At any risk, and on any terms, I had resolved to save thee; and they are even now at the door, who would enable me to effect that purpose. But I feel my determination, unchangeable as I had believed it to be, yield to thy stronger, though gentler spirit! Forgive me, noble friend," he added, taking the old man's hand in his, "I had resolved to have borne thee forcibly hence, and braved even thy displeasure, so only I might preserve thee."

"You would have done me a great wrong, my best Antipho," said Socrates, while he warmly pressed the hand which was clasped in his. "Death is not dreadful to one who hath made his whole life a preparation for it; especially when bowed down by years and infirmity, as I am. But the rebellion against lawful authority, and the injustice wherein thou wouldest have implicated me, are among the things I account most terrible."

"It is fixed, then," said Sivan. "So dies the last spark of hope, and to-morrow's sunset will behold thy place vacant among men. Yet think not that thou wilt die alone. One at least," he pursued, forgetting in the warmth of his feelings what he was saying; "one at least, who has long walked in life at thy side,

shall be thy companion in death also. But deem not," he once more resumed, as he saw the eye of the old man fixed in grave displeasure upon him, "that I have forgotten thy lessons, or would lay violent hands on the sanctuary of mine own life. The sentinel must not leave his post, nor the servant his employ, without due permission. Thou hast said this again and again, and my soul acknowledges its truth. But it has been granted me—I may without blame—" he paused and hesitated, not knowing how to vindicate himself in the eyes of his friend from the suspicion of intended suicide, without, at the same time, revealing the mystery of his existence.

Socrates regarded him with a look of peculiar interest. "Noble Antiphon," he said, "I have for many a year past suspected that some strange secret was connected with thine history. Thine ideas and sentiments are, in many respects, unlike those of other men, and drawn apparently from some source unknown to our day and country. Had I not been acquainted with thy origin and kindred, and so had indisputable proof that thou wert by birth, parentage, and education an Athenian, I should have often thought that I was discoursing with an inhabitant of some distant land, in habits of thought, and principles of action, wholly different from our own; or it might be with some being to whom the Gods have revealed things unknown to the general mass of men. And now the strange words thou hast let fall, would seem to encourage some such belief. But enough of this. I seek not to discover thy secret, if a secret there be; for which, indeed, the present were no fitting time. I would only ask of thee, as the last favour thou canst

render to thy friend, that thou do not execute the purpose thou hast formed ; but rather quit this city without delay, as thy kinsman Plato will, should he recover from his present sickness, and seek another country, where thou mayest pass thy life in teaching mankind the lessons of wisdom and virtue thou hast learnt. The Ever-blessed Gods have summoned me to depart from the body ; but thee they have not so summoned. It is wisest and happiest to await their pleasure."

"I cannot refuse thy request," said Sivan ; "I will live for thy sake until mine appointed hour shall be made manifest to me. And I promise thee to quit Athens, as soon as—as soon as all is over—that is, if thou wilt allow me to stay with thee to the last!"

"Most surely," said the philosopher; "always supposing that thou canst command thyself, as he who hath been so long a lover of divine wisdom, should do. But I pray thee, my best Antipho, leave me for the present. The dawn cannot be far off ; and I would be alone for the few hours that yet remain to me, before my friends visit me for the last time."

Sivan obeyed in silence. He quitted the apartment, and rejoining his slaves, bade them convey a message to Cebes, to the effect that their scheme had been frustrated. Further, he gave directions to Syrus, to be ready for immediate departure at nightfall on the ensuing day, and attend him with the boat and crew at the spot where the latter were even now assembled. Having completed every needful arrangement, he took up his station near the prison-gates ; awaiting the hour of daybreak which would once more admit him to the presence of the martyr.

I seek not to dwell on that solemn and touching scene, that lives in the immortal pages of Plato; and which generation after generation has perused with sorrow and admiration—how from early dawn to sunset the condemned Criminal conversed on the highest and holiest topics with a voice as unfaltering and a brow as serene, as though he had been making summer holiday with his friends on the woody banks of the Cephisus—how when evening drew on, and the fatal cup was brought him, he received it with unruffled composure, and drank its contents, amid the choking sobs of his assembled friends, which the sight of his cheerful calmness alone prevented from bursting forth into the bitterest cries of lamentation and mourning—and how, at length, he sank peacefully and painlessly to his final sleep.

Sivan stood silently by, until he beheld the eye whose expression he had so often watched, become glazed and rigid, and felt the beloved hand grow colder than monumental marble—then, without a word, he quitted the prison—proceeded to the sea-coast, and ere the darkness of night had closed in, the shores of Attica were but as a faint cloud on the distant verge of the horizon.

CHAPTER IX.

God's holy word, from all concealed,
To Jacob's sons was known.
To them His statutes were revealed,
To them and them alone.
The gifts His gracious love supplies,
He gave no heathen land,
Nor could the wisest of their wise
His wisdom understand.

147TH PSALM.

MORNING broke gloriously over the Ægæan, and the bark which conveyed Sivan and his companions, danced lightly before the breeze along the surface of that loveliest sea which the sky of either hemisphere looks down upon. Island after island—some, masses of pure white marble that stood out fresh and clear against the morning sky, others with lofty crags mantled with the vine and the olive—rose in endless succession from its bosom; and far off the shores of Asia, the sacred land of poetry and tradition, lay like a soft cloud on the verge of the horizon. Sivan, whose soul was never insensible to the beauties of nature, felt his sorrow grow more tranquil as he looked on the scene around him. But if calm, it was nevertheless very deep. The death of Socrates had severed the sole remaining link which bound him to earth,

and the promise he had made to his departed friend, by which he felt himself irrevocably bound, added much to his regret and perplexity. For what was he now to live? The hopes that had induced him to resume again the load of humanity, were extinguished utterly and for ever. The existence which had been bestowed upon him as a special and peculiar privilege, would now become a useless and intolerable burden. He had no desire to see more of the ways of men or conceive fresh hopes to end in fresh disappointment.

So passed the early hours of the day. Towards sunset a gradual change came over the face of things, but so gradual that it was not at first noticed. The wind which had sunk during the last twenty-four hours, began to rise again in low wailing sounds that threatened a hurricane. Inky clouds gathered in larger and larger masses and overspread the sky, which presently became so dark, that it was scarcely possible to see their way for any considerable distance. Syrus at last came to Sivan, and asked him whether the pilot had not better make immediately for the nearest shore, that they might secure themselves as well as they could against the approaching storm. Sivan assented. He was himself quite indifferent to any risk he might encounter, but he was unwilling to expose any of his companions and particularly Syrus, for whom he entertained a most cordial regard, to danger. The steersman at once put about the helm, and made for an island which he saw at no great distance from them. But long before they could succeed in reaching it, the tempest burst upon them, with a violence tenfold greater than it had yet exhibited. The heaven

became black as midnight, and the fierce rush of the wind snapped the mast short off, and carried it, together with the sail and two of the sailors who were entangled in the shrouds, far off into the darkness. The pilot quitted his hold on the rudder, which indeed had become quite useless, and suffered the vessel to run before the storm, whithersoever it might please to bear them. The crew employed themselves in baling out the water, which every now and then broke in heavy seas over the gunwale. How long this continued it was impossible to say, for all trace of time had long been lost; but it seemed to their terrified imaginations as if days had elapsed since the outbreak of the storm; and as to what part of the ocean they had now been driven to, there was not the faintest ground for forming a conjecture. Worn out at last by alarm and fatigue, all but two lay insensible on the deck.

Sivan and Syrus alone retained their senses; the former being upheld chiefly by his total indifference as to what might be his fate; the latter, a man of hardy and powerful frame, by his great strength, combined with his resolution to protect and save his master, to whom he was warmly attached. He contrived to procure some food, which from time to time he took himself, and obliged Sivan also to swallow. This likewise helped to sustain them; but still there were times when their senses would become confused, and Sivan retained a strange consciousness, on awaking from one of these partial trances, of having heard a voice offering up supplications in the well-remembered language, which he had spoken during the first of his lives, on the plains of Elam; but which he had never

since listened to. But he ascribed the phenomenon to the wild fancy of his disordered brain.

At length, after an interval of time that seemed endless, the gale began to break, the fury of the wind gradually subsided ; and a ray of sunshine struggling through the clouds showed them a wild waste of tossing waves, and at some little distance a single rocky islet, against which they were breaking in large foaming masses. At the same time they could perceive by the clearer light, that the vessel, which had suffered greatly during the hurricane, could not be kept afloat many hours longer. With great difficulty they succeeded in rousing such of the crew as were still alive from the swoon of exhaustion into which they had fallen ; and pointed out to them that their only hope of escape consisted in endeavouring to reach the shore of the island, from which they were now about a mile distant. Stimulated by the sense of their danger, the sailors addressed themselves to the work as well as their enfeebled frames would permit them. The pilot seated himself once more at the rudder, which had fortunately escaped injury, and made for a narrow opening between the crags ; the only point at which there appeared to be a possibility of effecting a landing. Before they had proceeded half-way, however, the vessel struck on a sunk rock, and her timbers, already loosened by the heavy strain they had undergone, parted asunder with the shock. Sivan and Syrus, who had been seated in the fore-part of the boat, clung to the wreck, which was borne along by the tide to the very point for which the pilot had endeavoured to steer, and was dashed by the waves into a fissure among the rocks ; where, fortunately for

them, it stuck fast. Clinging firmly to the stump of the bowsprit, Syrus was enabled to resist the backward rush of the billow that had carried them in, and before it could return to carry Sivan, who was now quite insensible, in his arms up a steep cleft in the rock ; which had been formed, as it appeared, by the action of a little stream, that found its way by that channel to the sea. By dint of great exertions he contrived to reach a level platform above the encroachment of the tide ; and then, exhausted with the effort, he fell down, overcome by weariness, by the side of his equally helpless companion.

It was many hours before he awoke, and he then became sensible that the hot sun was pouring down upon his exposed forehead with a fierce and painful heat. He staggered to his feet, and looked around him. The scene he beheld was a strange contrast to the one he had lately witnessed. The sky was blue and serene as though it had never been darkened by a cloud ; and a slight swell was all that remained of the wild commotion by which the waters had been agitated. Eagerly he swept the horizon with his glance, in the hope of discovering some other land near at hand ; but in vain, not a speck could any where be discerned. He looked again nearer home, thinking that some of his late companions might have succeeded, like himself and Sivan, in reaching the island. But here also he was disappointed. Either their strength had been too much reduced to enable them to struggle successfully with the waves ; or they had been dashed against the cliffs which entirely surrounded the islet, except at the single spot upon which they had themselves been thrown. He stooped to examine his companion, who

still lay in a state of insensibility at his feet. The slave's first care was of course to endeavour to relieve him; and he proceeded forthwith to search for some place which might afford him shelter from the overpowering heat. After some time he succeeded in discovering a deep cavern on the farther side of the island; near which trickled forth the spring, whose rocky bed formed the ravine by which they had ascended the precipice a few hours before. Hither he conveyed the sufferer, who was still insensible, and having moistened his lips and forehead with water, had the satisfaction of seeing him once more open his eyes.

Syrus now sought about for food, but the island did not appear to produce vegetation of any kind; nor had he the means of ensnaring any of the fish whom he could see sporting about in the clear waters. He began to fear that they had only escaped one form of death, to encounter another and more terrible one; when he recollect ed the provisions with which the vessel had been stored, some of which might still be left in the wreck that lay jammed fast among the jagged crags. On making search he found his hope realized. The bow of the ship had remained entire, and in the lockers it contained Syrus found a considerable supply of bread and dried meats, as well as several flasks of Chian wine. With these he returned to Sivan, and was much relieved at finding that he had recovered his consciousness, and was enjoying the change from the scorching sun to the cool shade of the cavern. Food and rest soon restored his strength sufficiently to allow of his accompanying Syrus in his examination of the island. The result of their search verified the

opinion originally formed by Syrus, that it produced nothing that could serve them for food ; being in fact a mere rock, too steep and high out of the water to allow of the formation of soil. The latter contrived, however, to manufacture some fishing-tackle from the ropes and nails attached to the wreck. By this means he was enabled to furnish Sivan and himself with fish enough to support life, husbanding their store of provisions as carefully as possible, in order to supply any emergency that might arise.

One evening they were seated, as was their usual practice at that hour, on the platform of rock where they had first taken refuge, watching the setting sun, whose orb was on the point of sinking beneath a gorgeous bank of clouds that formed the limit of the horizon. Sivan was unusually silent and melancholy ; and his companion, whose eye had been vainly seeking for any appearance of a vessel whose attention they might hope to attract, at length noticed his depression.

“ Noble master,” he said, “ may your slave know what troubles you ? Is there any thing you need, which I can procure you ? ”

“ Call me not master, my Syrus,” answered Sivan ; “ thou knowest that I never greatly loved the word, even in Athens ; and here it is nothing but a melancholy jest. For many a year past I have regarded thee rather as a friend than a servant ; and had it been otherwise, community of danger and suffering would have made us friends, or at least equals, long ere this.”

“ Do I not know it, best Antipho ? ” cried Syrus.

"Trust me, had it not been so, thou and I had never been sitting side by side on this ledge of rock. When on the first morning of our voyage, I beheld the distant coast of Asia—the native land that I had not trodden for more than eight-and-twenty years—what prevented me, thinkest thou, from commanding the pilot and the crew to direct their course thither, but my love for thee? A word from me, and they would have obeyed without hesitation or question: and then should have I seen once more the hills that stand about Jerusalem, and drank again of the sweet waters of Siloam! It was not so much the memory of that day when thou didst rescue me from outrage and torture at the peril of thy life, nor of the light labour and honourable service which alone thou hast required of me, making me the envy of half the slaves in Athens—it was not these considerations so much that restrained me, as the sense that thou hadst ever seen in me the man, and not the instrument of thy pleasure, and for that my heart was bound to thee for ever."

"Thou sayest well," answered Sivan; "I could scarce have blamed thee if thou hadst used the means at thy command of regaining thy freedom: but I thank thee no less for thy generous forbearance. We are indeed friends, and, as it is the privilege of friends to know each other's thoughts, thou shalt learn mine. There is nothing that saddens me so much as the contemplation of the beauty of nature. See that broad expanse of sky in which the stars are coming forth in myriads which no man can number, until the whole of the mighty arch shall be thickly studded with them. See yonder waves, as far as the eye can

follow, rising and falling in obedience to the wonderful law that regulates them. Note the sun sinking among those gorgeous clouds, fulfilling the law that first gave him being. So have they done since the first morning of creation: so will continue to do till the final hour of their existence. Each has its appointed sphere of duty, which it performs with perfect and unchanging fidelity, and therefore it is that they are beautiful in every aspect under which they can be contemplated. We hold that the noblest work of creation is the human soul; yet that, unlike all others, is full of discord and rebellion, which destroy its glory and its grace! Is it not a source at once of wonder and of sorrow, to call this to mind? Take, for instance, the land we have but lately quitted. How bounteous are the gifts with which Heaven has endowed it! A healthful climate, a smiling sky, a fertile soil, the fairest face that nature can put on—these are the least among its blessings! Security from foreign danger, stability of social institutions, freedom, knowledge, enlightenment—these are its priceless inheritance! Yet to what purpose are these gifts applied? To the indulgence of selfish passion at the cost of the happiness of thousands: to the aggrandizement of the power of a single state, though thereby the liberty and happiness of all others is destroyed. If the Athenians have not trodden down all mankind beneath their feet, it is not because they lacked the will, but the power to do so. Yet where on the face of earth shall we find a people more gifted with intellectual discernment, or more rich in the treasures of divine wisdom than they are?"

Syrus made no answer for some time. He buried

his face in his hands, and was evidently lost in thought. At last he replied, "I know not what it is that induces me to break the silence of so many years, and reveal to thee that which I had solemnly vowed to myself never to breathe to Gentile ear. It must be, I think, that thy sentiments and desires are so unlike those of the nation to which thou belongest, that I cannot count thee as one of them, and feel that it is no breach of my vow to tell thee all. Where, sayest thou, canst thou find a people gifted more highly with intellect, or possessing deeper insight into the truths that heaven and earth contain, than these Athenians? I can tell thee of a nation, measured against whom, in respect of genius and depth of knowledge, they are but as the oil-fed lamp to the brightness of the noonday sun. The light possessed by the most learned sages that the schools of Athens ever reared, is darkness, and their wisdom folly, when compared with theirs—a people, to whom, and to whom alone of all the nations of the earth, God Himself has deigned to unfold His true nature; to whom alone He has imparted the lamp of His heavenly wisdom, whereby they may direct their steps; who, though they be now trodden down, and despised of men, shall yet at no distant day become lords of the wide earth, and diffuse over its face the same divine illumination, which at present is revealed to them alone.

"Hearken, my brother: thou hast hitherto known me as Syrus,—a slave that is from the land of Syria,—so little do the Gentiles know of the very existence of the favoured and peculiar people of God! But the true name of the country whence I come is

the land of Israel ; and there, ere I was torn away from home and kindred to be the servant of the Gentile oppressor, I was known as Meshech,—Meshech, the son of Sivan,—O Rizpah, my wife ! O Sheva, my son ! how can I utter your names even now, after all these years, and yet endure to live ?”

He buried his face once more in his hands, and sobbed aloud. Sivan, too, was deeply and strangely affected. The recurrence of names so familiar and beloved, yet so long unheard—it was like a voice from another world. Could he believe that he had, after a lapse of so many hundred years, and in a manner so unexpected, met with a descendant of his own original race, perhaps of his own direct lineage ? Suddenly the recollection of the prayers and exclamations he had heard uttered, during the storm, in the well-known language of his own early years, recurred to him. It must be so, strange as it seemed. He waited with intense interest to hear further.

At length Syrus resumed, “ I pray thee, my friend, forgive my weakness. Had thy lot been as mine, hadst thou known what I have lost, thou wouldest not wonder at my sorrow. But to proceed. For more than fifteen hundred years God has deigned to set apart the people to which I belong, for especial privilege and blessing. While the heathen world around them have darkly sought after the face of God, on them It hath shone, fully revealed ; while all other nations have lost the light originally bestowed on man, or, at best, retained but a few feeble sparks of it, they have ever preserved it in its purity and integrity. Yet these high gifts are, as I have

already stated, but the earnest of still higher and more glorious ones, to be hereafter bestowed. Dost thou heed my words, noble Antiphos?"

"I heed thee," answered Sivan; "my ear hath hearkened to thy speech with eager attention. But I would ask thee, wherefore hath the great Ruler of the world thus singled out thy land from all other lands? and why hath the great Father of mankind limited his mercy to one family, to the exclusion of his other children?"

"I will tell thee," said Syrus; "it was on account of the love He bore to our great ancestor Abraham, the eighth in descent from Shem, the son of Noah: in whose days the Lord destroyed all mankind, save eight persons, from the face of the earth; of which great event the Greeks, like all other nations, retain some faint and imperfect tradition. As He then selected one single family from the countless families of mankind to be preserved, when all the rest perished, so did He set apart one man's posterity alone, to be saved from the deluge of ignorance and sin that was fast spreading over the world, and to keep alive the knowledge of Him, until the appointed time of His fuller manifestation of Himself. As Noah found acceptance with Him because he retained the fear and obedience of God, while all else forgot or defied Him, so did the strong faith of Abraham, and his unhesitating devotion of himself to fulfil the divine will, in the midst of an idolatrous generation, obtain for him the yet greater blessings of which his children are the heirs."

Sivan's heart was again profoundly moved. All was so strange, yet the greater part so well and so

surely known to him already,—a hundred times better and more surely known to him, than to the friend, who deemed he was pouring into his ear the first outlines of things hitherto undreamed of! The mention of the names of his grandsire and great-grandsire, with whom the recollections of his original youth and manhood were associated, and whose eventful histories had been the earliest things impressed on his youthful fancy, called up a thousand memories which had slept since the days of his first life, and transported him in imagination to the shadow of the shepherd's tent, under which it had been passed. Syrus watched him with interest, and thought that he was weighing the likelihood of his tale, and perhaps inclining to reject it as visionary or fabulous. But Sivan had no such thoughts. There needed nothing to convince him of the truth of a history, to the greater part of which his own personal experience bore the most ample witness!

After a pause, therefore, he resumed the conversation, by begging Syrus to relate to him the chief incidents in the career of that great ancestor, who had won for his posterity such signal privileges; and after that to unfold the various fortunes of his descendants. Syrus willingly complied; and for many an evening afterwards they sat together on the rocky platform,—the lowplash of the waves as they lapped against the cliffs, the only sound that disturbed the profound tranquillity of nature,—while the one poured forth with the eloquence of an enthusiast the marvellous history of the Jewish people, and the other with suppressed, but even deeper eagerness, drank in the narrative. The touching biography of the

early Patriarchs, their noble courage, constancy, and devotion; the sufferings of the children of Israel in Egypt, and their miraculous deliverance (to the truth of which the knowledge he had acquired, when a dweller in that land, bore unexpected witness); the wanderings in the desert; the solemn delivery of the law among the wonders of Sinai, and the superhuman grandeur and beauty of its precepts; the rapid conquest of Canaan, the glories of David and Solomon, the greatness, decay, and fall of the Jewish monarchy; the Captivity, and the Restoration—were each in turn descanted upon by the narrator; and each was full of inexhaustible interest to the listener. With yet deeper delight did Sivan hear of the promised Deliverer, who was to restore the kingdom to Israel, and bring regeneration to the lost and blinded nations of the world. With joy and hope, that far exceeded any of his former anticipations, did Sivan listen to the words of Syrus, as he repeated the glowing language in which the prophets of Israel and Judah had set forth the coming of the Messiah; and deeply did he exult in his secret heart to think that the peculiar privilege bestowed upon him by the Angel, would enable him hereafter to behold the triumphant establishment of his kingdom among men.

Week after week glided away in this manner. The stock of provisions they had recovered from the wreck, though carefully husbanded, had nearly disappeared. They were now almost entirely dependent on their fishing for their daily supply of food; and that they were well aware a storm might at any time, for several days at least, interrupt. They had become convinced that the hopes they had entertained of being

fetched away by some passing ship were delusive. It seemed only too evident that the island lay entirely out of any track pursued by the navigators of those times, or was too far from any shore to allow of their venturing thither. Such was the state of things, when one morning Sivan finding himself unusually feverish and weary, did not accompany his companion as usual to the fishing-place; but wrapping himself in his mantle, again laid down to rest. He fell into an uneasy slumber, in which he dreamed that he was again sailing with his friend in the bark that had borne them from Athens, and that he beheld him suddenly fall overboard, and stretch out his hands to him, calling for assistance as he rose to the surface, while he himself continued fixed immovably to his seat. He started from his slumber with this impression so full upon him, that he had almost resolved to go forth to seek the companion whom he had fancied was imploring his aid; but a moment afterwards remembering that it was nothing but a dream, he once more composed himself to sleep. It was noon before he again awoke, and then finding himself refreshed, he rose and went to rejoin his companion. But Syrus was not at the fishing-place where he had expected to find him. He climbed to the platform, but he was not there either. He called him, but there was no answer. He grew alarmed, and in the eagerness of his anxiety, traversed every part of the island, which at a time of less excitement he would not have ventured to attempt. But Syrus was nowhere to be found. At length the conviction forced itself upon him that he must have fallen into the sea. Suddenly he remembered the voice which he had heard in his

sleep, calling upon him for help ; and doubted not that it was really his friend's cry for assistance, which he had supposed to be the mere creation of his fancy. Little question remained as to what had happened. His friend must have been sitting—in all likelihood immersed in thought—with the fishing-line in his hand. A large fish must have seized it, and dragged him, before he could disengage himself, into the water. Syrus, he knew, was unable to swim, and a strong current ran on that side of the island, directly out to sea. Doubtless ere this his corpse was many miles distant from shore.

Sivan shed a few tears for this true and faithful friend; but he felt that, after all, he had been mercifully saved from an equally certain, but a more painful and lingering death. The question now arose, what was he himself to do ? He was convinced that he could not sustain life by his own efforts. Even if the fishing-tackle had not been lost, he would not have had skill to use it with any success, and the store of provisions from the wreck was almost entirely spent. Was he bound to undergo the pangs of gradual starvation, in the hope that some ship might at the very last extremity appear, and bear him away in safety from the island ? After careful consideration he became satisfied that the promise he had given Socrates did not bind him to this. He had only agreed to wait until his appointed hour should be made manifest to him, and surely he might consider that, under his peculiar circumstances, it had been made manifest to him now. He resolved, therefore, for the third time, to lay aside his being—to resume it again, as he exultingly reflected, when the Healer of nations should at length, in the

fulness of time, have appeared, and the Sun of righteousness have burst on the darkened world. He drew forth the bough, for the third time, from his bosom : and for the third time sank into a deep and dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER X.

Ye stand denounced before our solemn throne,
As guilty of that Galilean faith,
Whose impious and blaspheming scorn despairs
Our fathers' Gods.

MILMAN.

JERUSALEM was gay with festivity and rejoicing. From the higher points of elevation, such as the walls of Zion, and the Inner Court of the Temple, the city presented a singular spectacle. Upon every house-top which, as few readers will require to be told, are in the East perfectly flat, was erected a booth of green boughs, intermixed with flowers, which formed the residence of the family during the seven days of the festival which was now proceeding. In many of these might be seen family groups, feasting and carousing; and afterwards, as evening drew on, the sound of the harp and the tabret, and the tinkling feet of the Jewish women as they moved together in the graceful dances of their country, mingled pleasantly with the tramp of feet, and noise of passing crowds. The streets were thronged with inhabitants; some proceeding to, others returning from, the Temple, where prayers and sacrifices were offered during the entire day. All carried in their hands clusters of palm-branches,

intermixed with olive and myrtle, bound with strings of gold and silver thread, and greeted every one they met with the festal shout of "Hosanna!" The autumn sun that shone down upon the narrow streets revealed, in all its brilliancy, the gay attire of the revellers, and added a fresh charm to the animation of the scene.

As the hour for commencing the ceremony of the Hosanna drew near, the great Court of the Israelites became so crowded, as hardly to be able to contain all who wished to press into it. An unusual number of Jews, both from Galilee and from foreign countries, had this year attended the festival; and the first day of the ceremony of encompassing the altar always attracted the greatest numbers: except, of course, the more imposing ceremony of the great Hosanna on the seventh. Yet, notwithstanding the outward pomp and semblance of festivity, a close observer might have noticed symptoms of anxiety and disquietude on many faces. In particular the more dignified functionaries, the chief priests and elders who composed the Sanhedrin, looked gloomy and anxious; and near the steps of the altar of burnt-offerings several small groups of them might be noted, discussing in subdued tones some topic which seemed of no welcome nature.

"Hast thou heard, O Adonijah!" said one, "the news which these fugitives from Lydda are said to have brought in? They report that Gallus, the accursed heathen, hath laid waste the whole neighbourhood of Cæsarea, and hath sacked and burnt Antipatris. The account they give of the slaughter is, I am told, too horrible for belief."

"I have heard rumours of it," returned Adonijah;

"but the city hath been so filled with them of late, that I know not how to attach much credit to it. But if their tale be true, Gallus is even now on his way hither with a force which they estimate at fully twenty thousand men."

"Yes," said Zachariah, for such was the first speaker's name, "the heathen found none there to oppose him but women and children, whose husbands and fathers are keeping the feast at Jerusalem. Should he venture hither, as rumour affirms, he will meet with a somewhat different reception!"

"That, then, is the reason, I conclude, for which the Council is summoned after the conclusion of the Hosanna," said Adonijah, "of which I have just received notice. Preparations must of course be made without delay for the defence of the city."

"Partly on that account," said a third, "but also, as I learn from Ben-Gorion, in order to take measures with some of these wretched blasphemers against the law, whose impiety hath of late reached such a height as may well bring a curse upon this city, more fatal than the sword of the Gentile. As the Lord liveth, nothing seems to repress the infatuation of these Nazarenes. If treated with lenity, they but presume on it to proceed to more open and insulting demonstrations: if punished, they only wax more determined, and for one that is cut off, ten new ones seem to spring up. How to deal with the evil in any way, without increasing it, might baffle the wisdom of King Solomon himself."

"Yes," said Zachariah, "the Council hath of late deemed it more expedient to ignore them as much as possible, seeing that severities seem but to heighten the mischief; and I have deemed them wise in so doing."

But the blasphemy whereof the Nazarenes have now been guilty is, as I learn, so flagrant, that we may well fear that the vengeance of God will fall upon us, if we neglect to punish it. What thinkest thou, Adonijah?"

"I know not what to say," was the reply. "None of these Nazarenes, or Christians, as they call themselves, have ever come under my immediate notice. But, doubtless, if half of what is told of them be true, it is the duty of those who sit in Moses' seat to purge the holy city of such abomination. We shall be able to judge better at the meeting of the Council to-day, where the offenders will be charged with their crime; and we shall hear what defence they can make. But the sacred rite, as I think, is about to commence: we must take our places."

As he spoke, the priests and Levites in charge of the Temple formed themselves into a long procession, preceded by trumpets and other musical instruments; while the laity behind ranged themselves in similar order. Thus arrayed they proceeded slowly to encompass the Court of the priests, waving as they walked the branches of palm and other trees which they carried, and raising the well-known shout, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Save, Lord, we beseech Thee!" When the head of the procession had made the circuit of the Court once, it filed off in various directions, so as to allow the entire body to do the same; for the ceremony of encompassing the altar seven times was reserved for the seventh or great day of the feast. It is needless to say, that this observance, to which the Jews were peculiarly attached, was at once commemorative of the past, and emblematic of the future. The overthrow of Jericho, one of the most glorious reminis-

cences of Jewish history, and the first great military exploit of their ancestors, was naturally dear to that proud and intensely national people; and the future coming of the Messiah, the hope which beat in every pulse of their hearts, under whatsoever shape it might be expressed, always awoke their warmest enthusiasm. It was a grand sight to see the vast multitude that participated in the ceremony, moved so deeply by one and the same feeling, and uniting in the same fervent wish. Not one of the whole assembly felt more deeply the influence of the scene than Adonijah, or, as we shall hereafter call him, Sivan. A twelvemonth had now elapsed since he had once more found himself a tenant of this earth, in the form of a priest of the Jewish Temple, and member of the Sanhedrin, a man of advanced age, and of a character universally honoured and respected. This position was, it need not be said, the one he had most earnestly desired when he sank to sleep in the rocky cavern of his solitary island; and deep had been the thankfulness, and fervent the enthusiasm, with which he had trod the ground which was hallowed in his memory by so many sacred associations, and illumined by yet more stirring and holier hopes. The Outer Court of the Gentiles, in which the same God was worshipped whom he had hitherto but imperfectly known—the Court of the Israelites, into which the favoured people of God (of whom he was now one), and they only, might enter—the Inner Court of the priests, reserved for so few even of that privileged nation, yet not forbidden to him—the Sanctuary itself, with its lofty portico glittering with the priceless gifts of princes—the Holy Place, into which the light came softened and subdued by the

rich Babylonian veil which shrouded its entrance ; its mysterious garniture, the seven-branched candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the altar of incense, before which it was his high privilege sometimes to minister—above all, the solemn Inner Shrine, into which but one foot might enter, and that one but once in the entire year ; the Holy of Holies, where, in the palmy days of Israel's glory, the presence of God had been visibly manifested in fire, and was now no less really there, though no longer discernible by the outward sense,—on these he gazed with a reverent delight, that had no limit and knew no satiety. The sacred Scriptures also, to which his high office gave him ready access, and of which the instructions of his friend Syrus had given him but a general outline, with a few scattered specimens of the more striking passages,—how eagerly did he fasten on them, and dwell upon the words of lofty promise, couched in language so rich and gorgeous as to seem a meet vehicle for the expression of revelations so mighty ! Hour after hour had he sat in the chambers of the priests, wrapped in the perusal of that marvellous Volume, or wandered alone, sometimes by the wood-crowned heights of Olivet, sometimes by the rocky banks of Kedron, feeding his enraptured fancy with visions of the Light of Israel ; which he, in common with his whole nation, believed to be even now about to rise upon the world.

It was the absorbing belief in this latter expectation, that withdrew his attention from what else must have inevitably awakened his surprise and disgust ; the crimes and domestic strife with which the whole country, and Jerusalem more especially, was distracted. Treachery, bloodshed, mutual rancour and bitterness,

deformed the whole aspect of society ; and farther off, the threatening of foreign war formed a gloomy background to a picture, whose features were already too full of melancholy. But all these appeared to him so many tokens of the near approach of the Prince of Peace, at whose appearance—so he understood the declarations of the prophets—the sword would drop from every hand, and the words of bitterness would die on every tongue ; and mankind, and more especially the children of Abraham, would become as brothers. It is little wonder, if in the midst of a state of things so turbulent and disorganized as that which now agitated the Jewish people, the sect of the Christians, or Nazarenes, as they were more generally called, attracted but little of his attention. The expectation of the immediate coming of the Messiah, which was the topic uppermost in every mind, had, as might naturally be expected, given rise to a multitude of pretenders, whose impostures were being every day exposed and punished ; and the odious calumnies attached, by public report, to the community known by the name of Christians, were such as to prejudice every upright man against them. Sivan felt the necessity of repressing these impieties, as he deemed them, by the arm of the law ; yet his spirit naturally shrank from any thing resembling severity, where the conscience was concerned ; and it was with a doubtful and unwilling step that he proceeded, at the conclusion of the ceremony in the Temple, to attend the meeting of the Sanhedrin, which had been convoked.

The great Council of the Jews, instituted originally, as is believed, after the return from the Captivity, still retained, under the Roman sway,

supreme authority in all ecclesiastical matters; excepting only that it could not inflict the punishment of death for blasphemy or sacrilege, without the consent of the procurator—a restriction which the Jews had from the first murmured at, as an insult to their national independence. They had always eagerly caught at any opportunity which circumstances might offer them, of reasserting their ancient right; even though the consequences might be increased severity and humiliation at the hand of their heathen rulers. It was on such an occasion, some few years since, that St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, had been put to death by them: and it is no wonder if their first act on renouncing their allegiance to Rome, was to exercise the power of capital punishment against such offenders as might appear to deserve it.

The place in which its meetings were held was, at the period which we describe, a large building near the Temple, but not within the sacred precincts, as was formerly the case. The central court was, as usual in all oriental countries, the part of the house selected for the meeting. At the further end the seat of the Nasi, or President, was erected, raised on several steps above the level of the quadrangle. On his right and left, on seats of less elevation, were seated the two vice-presidents, styled the Ab, or father of the Council, and the Chakam, or wise man. Below these again, were the chairs of the two registrars, who recorded the sentence of the Council; the former in case of an acquittal; the latter, if the judgment should be unfavourable to the accused. The remainder of the Council, to the number of seventy, consisting of the chief priests, elders, and doctors of the law, occupied chairs ranged in a semi-circular shape; the accused

party being stationed at the lower end, facing the seat of the President. The marble pavement was strewn with rich carpets, and the court covered over-head with an awning composed of curtains of various colours, which excluded the burning rays of the sun; while a small fountain in the centre sent up its sparkling waters, and diffused a pleasant freshness around.

"Adonijah Ben-Hamuel," said the President, as Sivan entered, "thou art somewhat late, and the business we have in hand is urgent. But we are now, as I think, all assembled. You have doubtless heard the tidings brought in by the scouts from Antipatris and Lydda, who affirm that the Gentile, may Tophet be his portion! is even now on his march hither, with a force which is variously stated, but which is probably something short of twenty thousand men. Immediate measures of some kind must of course be taken. It is the first object of this meeting to decide what these shall be. Whosoever, therefore, hath any proposal to make, let him declare it. Speak thou first, Eleazar, my son, to whom, by authority of this Council, the chief command of our armies hath been entrusted."

"There can be no doubt," said Eleazar, rising in answer to this appeal, "as to the general course which we ought to adopt towards these Roman robbers who lay waste the heritage of the Lord. No son of Israel, I feel assured, hath any thought of submission; which indeed were double treason to Zion, at the time when her great Deliverer is about to appear, and restore the sceptre to her grasp. The valiant Simon Ben-Gioras, with whom I have already conferred, counsels that we should, without the delay of a single hour, march forth to meet the heathen with such force as we can muster;

but I hold that we have scarce sufficient strength to make our victory certain. I judge it wiser to await the approach of Gallus beneath the walls of Jerusalem. Let us suffer him to assault the city, if he dare. The walls are massive enough to defy an army five times more numerous than his. When his numbers shall have been thinned by fruitless efforts to surmount them, we can sally forth and complete his discomfiture. Further, Samuel Ben-Gorion hath suggested that it would be expedient to open negotiations with him, whereby his advance may be delayed, until our levies shall have attained sufficient strength to ensure his destruction. To this counsel I also incline; yet would I gladly hear what the wisdom of any of our brethren may advise, before we arrive at a decision which must needs be fraught with important consequences."

A short interval succeeded, and then a man of middle age, the same who had taken part in the conversation with Sivan in the Court of the Israelites, rose to address the assembly. "Valiant Eleazar," he said, "my heart goes with thee in what thou hast said respecting the righteousness of resisting the Gentile oppressor; and I am fully assured, as thou art, that He for whose coming Israel looks, delayeth not, but is even now at the threshold. Yet I, for one, hold that his coming will be a sign of peace to mankind, and not a scourge. Were it not well, then, that we herald his arrival, not with garments rolled in blood, and the shrieks of the wounded and dying, but with sheathed weapons, and words of amity? At least let it not be our fault, if we cannot do so. Let us send —such is my counsel—peaceful messengers to Gallus, demanding the restitution of our national independ-

ence, which is outraged by the residence of a foreign ruler among us. But for other points at issue, such as the payment of tribute, and the like, which our fathers have assented to without blame for many generations—these we shall do wisely to concede. So may we turn the present strait to which the power of Rome is reduced, to the permanent advantage of our country, without the effusion of needless bloodshed. Such is the counsel of Zachariah, the son of Baruch ; which though it be, as I know well it will be, unwelcome to many—yet I pray you weigh it well, for it cometh from one who hath the welfare of Zion at heart, as warmly as any that are here present to-day."

There was a deep silence as Zachariah resumed his seat. Probably there were in the assembly several calmer and wiser spirits, who could not but acknowledge to themselves the prudence, as well as the humanity of his advice. But they were too well aware of the general feeling, to venture so much as to express their admiration of his sentiments, far less to propose their adoption. Nothing probably but the high esteem in which the speaker had always been held, prevented a general outbreak of indignation. As it was, the silence was soon broken by a murmur of dissent, and a speaker, whose appearance was very different from the last, started with vehemence from his seat.

He was a tall man, arrayed in full armour, excepting that his head was uncovered. His stern features bore the impress of the most inflexible resolution ; and there was a gleam in his dark eye, which expressed ferocity or fanaticism, or it might be, both. This was Simon, the son of Gioras, the dreaded leader of the

party, whose ruthless disregard of human life, conspicuous even in that age of bloodshed, had procured them the title of the Assassins—a man who, in respect both of invincible determination and savage barbarity, has no parallel in history. His address corresponded well with his appearance. “What words are these,” he cried; “who talks of mercy to the wolf and the prowling dog, or forbearance towards these accursed robbers, who, in the sight of heaven, are worse than dogs? What mercy for the Gentile spoiler, who would profane the sanctuary of the Most High? Shall the Deliverer, when He cometh, have pleasure in such as these? Shall He not rather smite them with the sword and trample them beneath his feet? May the Lord do so to me, and more also, if my right hand spare one of these detested heathens whom it hath power to slay! Yet think not, noble Eleazar,” he continued, turning to the chief of the Zealots, “that I confound thy counsels with those which our brother Zachariah, for the first, and I trust the last time, hath propounded in this assembly. I have weighed thine arguments, and am well contented that we should do as thou dost advise. Let us send deputies forthwith to the Roman camp, and keep Gallus inactive, if possible, for a few days; by which time our muster will be sufficient to crush any force he can bring against us. And as this matter is urgent, were it not well, brethren, that the remaining business which has called us together should be at once despatched; in order that we may be free to complete the necessary arrangements?”

A general expression of approval followed this speech; and the President, rising, commanded the

officers of the court to introduce the prisoners, who had been waiting outside in the custody of the Levitical guard.

They entered, three in number, heavily manacled. The first was an old man with a venerable white beard and a mild tranquil expression of countenance, that involuntarily won the sympathy even of the enemies before whom he was arraigned. The other two were much younger; and one of them, from his likeness to the elder prisoner, was probably his son. Behind them came the witnesses and the accuser. The latter was stationed by an officer of the Sanhedrin on the right hand of the accused. Order having been restored, the President proceeded to put the usual questions to them.

"Unhappy men," he began, "outcasts from Israel and traitors to the law, as I fear I must account ye, of what tribe and family are ye, what occupation do ye follow, and what are the names whereby ye are known among men? Speak, thou who art the oldest, and should be the wisest among ye."

"Most reverend Nasi," replied the old man, "I am called Joachim, the son of Beriah, of the tribe of Benjamin, and my trade is that of a carpenter near the wall of Siloam. Yonder is my son, whom I have named Gideon; and this other youth is called Hermas, the son of Andreas, one of our race and people, but a stranger in this city, having arrived but a few days since from Antioch, where his father used to reside. What ground of offence they may allege against us, I do not know, though I can in part conjecture: but be assured that we are not aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, nor traitors to her allegiance."

"It is well spoken," said the President; "yet know we that a lying tongue hath many disguises. Speak thou now, Obadiah, and say what crime thou dost charge upon these prisoners here arraigned before us."

Obadiah stepped forward, and raising his right hand on high, listened reverently to the oath rehearsed by the officer, to which he responded with a deep Amen. Then turning round so as to face the President, he commenced his accusation.

"Venerable father of our people," he said, "it grieveth me that I must pursue any son of Israel unto his hurt, it may be unto death: yet were I justly chargeable with disobedience to the law of God, were I to suppress what hath come to my knowledge. It was yesterday, at the ninth hour, that I was worshipping in the Court of our people, when the lamb, that is daily offered for the sins of Israel, was sacrificed. Near me knelt a group of three persons, the three whom I now behold before me. As the animal fell dead beneath the knife of the priest, I heard the elder prisoner exclaim, 'O Thou, the true Lamb of God, once offered on the cross for the sins of mankind, have mercy on us, and take away our sins;' at which words both the youths bowed their heads and said, 'Amen.' Struck with horror at the blasphemy of these words; for I deemed that they could not but refer to the impostor who suffered the penalty of his impieties under Caiaphas, in the days of our fathers, I yet doubted what I should do; not feeling perfectly assured that I had heard aright. Immediately afterwards the younger criminal, who beareth, as it appears, the name of Gideon, exclaimed in less guarded tones,

'Vain is the sacrifice, vain the worship, the shadow of a reality that has fully come. O Thou, the true Sacrifice, even Jesus Christ, help and save us!' There could now be no doubt that blasphemy had been spoken ; and I immediately gave notice to the soldiers of the guard, who seized and bound them."

"This is a heavy charge," said the President, rising from his seat as he spoke, in which movement he was imitated by all present, as was the regular practice when blasphemy, or what they accounted as such, was uttered. "Hast thou witnesses to bring to its truth ; for if so, well thou knowest that deadly must be our sentence, and speedy its execution."

"I have," replied Obadiah. "My neighbour, Reuben, the jeweller, and Hosea, my sister's son, both saw the younger prisoners bow their heads, by which gesture these Nazarenes indicate their belief in their pretended Messiah ; and Hosea heard both speeches with sufficient distinctness, to be able to testify to their general meaning."

"Bring forward the witnesses," said the Nasi, "and let the oath be administered to them."

As the officers were about to obey, the old man interposed. "It needs not," he said ; "I admit the truth of all that hath been alleged. Obadiah hath in no way over-coloured the facts, and I would assure him that we meant not to wound his ear, or offend his feelings by what we said. It escaped us involuntarily, nor did we deem that any could hear us. For though we scruple not to affirm the truth when called on to do so, yet we hold it unlawful to provoke needlessly the wrath of those who are not of our faith. I thank him

also for his unwillingness to inflict, what he deems loss and suffering upon us. Let him be assured that we account him not as one who hath injured us, but on the contrary, as our friend and benefactor. For the rest, I would fain ask thy leave not to deny, but to defend our faith in the presence of this reverend assembly: and to prove that it is no blasphemy against God or the law of Moses, but the pure worship of the One, and the veritable fulfilment of the other. But if that may not be, then are we prepared to suffer cheerfully whatsoever thou mayest decree."

A murmur of indignation ran through the Council as they heard this proposal. "Audacious apostate," exclaimed the President; "wouldst thou intrude thy blasphemies on the ears of the very priests of the Most High God? Trust me, this effrontery will avail thee nothing! One hope alone is granted thee. Renounce in thine own name, and the names of these rash youths whom thine evil lessons have led astray, this foul impiety, or abide its consequences. Dost thou hear me, old man? declare at once in this presence, that this man, this Jesus, whom thou pretendst to worship -- declare him to be what he truly is, or woe to thy head and those of thy companions."

"I will," replied Joachim; "and in this high presence, I declare with my lips, as I believe with my heart, that the Man of whom thou speakest, the Man Christ Jesus, is also the Lord of heaven and earth; Very and Eternal God."

A fierce cry of anger broke from every lip. All

once more sprang from their seats, while the Nasi rent his garment, and the officials flung dust in the air, in token of their horror at the impiety which had just been uttered. "Seize them; gag their mouths; bear them outside the gates and stone them!" was shouted by a storm of voices. Sivan with difficulty succeeded in rescuing Hermas, against whom, he urged, nothing worthy of death had been proved; and who ought at least to be reserved for a more searching inquiry. He was, probably, only enabled to effect this, because the fury of the bystanders, which was for the moment concentrated upon the old man, rendered them comparatively indifferent to the fate of the youths. The other two were hurried out by the throng, with fierce assurances of immediate vengeance: and in a few moments Sivan and Hermas were the only occupants of the court. The two regarded each other with grave and melancholy looks.

"Unhappy youth," said Sivan, "Heaven hath spared thee this time. Fly, escape, and sin against God no more."

"I will fly," said Hermas; "mine hour is not yet come; and the Lord hath still work for me to do. One day I know well it will be granted me to yield my life for the sake of Christ, as these, my brethren, are now doing. Hark," he added, as a savage shout arose at a little distance, "even now they are passing to glory!" He bent his head for a few moments, as if absorbed in devotion, and then raising it again, addressed Sivan.

"I thank thee," said he, "generous stranger, for thy mercy. The Lord bless and reward thee with the knowledge of His truth; as He will do in His own

good time ! I will pray for its speedy advent. Farewell."

He rushed hastily from the house and was lost to sight ; while Sivan returned to his own abode, wrapped in profound meditation.

CHAPTER XI.

He who had never entered
A Christian church till then,
Now to a Christian church made straight,
And hastened thro' its open gate,
By his good angel guided.
And thinking, tho' he knew not why,
That there some blessed Power on high
Had help for him provided.

SOUTHEY.

A FEW days after the occurrences detailed in the last chapter, Sivan walked out in the early morning in the valley of Kedron, as was not unfrequently his custom. It was a favourite place with him ; its dark umbrageous gloom and uninterrupted solitude suiting well with the pensive and somewhat sombre turn of his mind. He had now abundant subject for meditation ; for the last few days had been full of stirring and important incidents. The rapid advance of Gallus against the city had defeated the schemes of the Sanhedrin for detaining him at Lydda. He had arrived, assaulted the city, and, after a battle, or rather a succession of battles, which had extended over several days, had retreated from Jerusalem without any apparent reason, nay, as it seemed, at the very moment when victory was within his grasp. The Jews, elated by

so unexpected a piece of good fortune, followed in large numbers, and hung on his retreat; and scouts had just come in with the news of heavy loss sustained by the Romans in an attack on their rear-guard. Sivan, while rejoicing at the deliverance his nation had thus experienced, was too wise and far-sighted not to fear that the ultimate consequences would be full of peril to his countrymen. Their enthusiasm had been heightened almost to fanaticism by the signal success they had obtained; which they had followed up, or rather, as he could not but think, abused to the utmost. Rome was not likely to forget either the humiliation or the loss that she had sustained. A collision with her, the conqueror of every nation who had ventured to oppose her, could not be regarded with indifference. The only thought that contained hope or comfort was the promised deliverance which, as all agreed, was about to be granted to the Jewish people. This consideration again diverted his thoughts into a fresh channel,—the sad and fatal obstinacy of the unhappy men, who were led by some strange delusion to affirm that the Messiah had appeared already. Sivan could not expel from his mind the recollection of the painful scene he had witnessed a few days before; the old man, with his calm and venerable aspect, and the youths, with fortitude beyond their years, braving that which most men shrink from, for the sake of an idle dream. The words of the aged prisoner, and the furious shout of the multitude that announced his death, still rang in Sivan's ears; and he longed to seek out any of these unhappy men, and endeavour to reclaim them to the true faith, from which they had fallen away.

He sat down beneath the shadow of some cedars, whose dense foliage completely concealed him from any who might be passing along the edge of the Kedron, though he was but a few feet distant from it. Suddenly, a figure passed him with a rapid but cautious step. Sivan started with surprise. It was the very person upon whom his thoughts were concentrated. He recognized at a glance Hermas, the youth whom he had saved a few days before from the vengeance of the multitude. He concluded that the fugitive, not venturing to enter the city after what had occurred, had sought a refuge in some of the empty tombs or caverns with which the valley abounded. He instantly rose to follow him ; and in confirmation of his conjecture, beheld him shortly after enter the portal of one of the largest of the ruined sepulchres ; in which it was generally believed that some of the more ancient kings of Jerusalem had been interred. Time, however, and the violence of the spoiler had long since divested the interior of every thing which could show the purpose for which it was originally designed.

Sivan followed cautiously. The neighbourhood of Jerusalem was full of violent and lawless characters, who respected neither age nor dignity ; and he was far from feeling assured that the companions of Hermas might not be of this character. His suspicions were greatly increased when, on entering the sepulchre, he found it to all appearance entirely empty. Resolving, however, not to abandon the pursuit until he had proof of the unworthiness of the object of it, he made careful search for the door by which the youth must have passed out ; and after a while discovered an opening in one corner, concealed by some shrubs which had taken

root within the ruins, leading, as it seemed, downwards into the bowels of the earth. At the same time, the sound of many voices, uniting in a simple strain of music, struck upon his ear. Somewhat reassured by these sounds, which indicated nothing violent or unholy, Sivan followed the track thus opened to him ; and traversing a winding subterraneous path, found himself at length in the entrance of a large vaulted cavern, which was sufficiently lighted through a few fissures in the roof of solid rock. It was evident at a glance that nature had been assisted by art in forming this secret place of rendezvous. The lower end, near which he stood, had been carefully built up with large stones, undressed and uncemented, leaving only a small doorway in the centre ; and he was thus enabled to see distinctly, through the crevices in the rough wall, all that passed within, while himself was concealed from view in deep shadow.

The scene he beheld, at the first sight gave him the notion that it was designed as an imitation of a synagogue. Towards the centre was raised a rude resemblance to the seat which the Jewish doctors occupied when preaching, and rough benches were placed at right angles with the walls, facing the eastern end. At this extremity stood a table of wood, in the same spot which in the synagogue was occupied by the ark containing the copies of the Pentateuch ; and behind it a massive wooden chair. But a closer inspection convinced him that he was mistaken in his notion ; for the seats of the women, instead of being wholly apart from those of the other sex,—railed off, indeed, so as to prevent their entering the house of worship—as was the universal practice with the Jews,

were simply ranged on the opposite side of the vault to that tenanted by the men : and whereas the Jewish women sustained no distinct part in the public celebration of worship, those whom he now beheld, were quite as prominent in their devotions as the men. Every alternate verse, in fact, of the hymn or chant which was now proceeding was sung by them ; and the effect thus produced by the change of voice was extremely impressive and beautiful.

Sivan had occupied his position but a few minutes when the singing ceased, and an aged man, simply attired, whose appearance formed a striking contrast to the rich robes and gorgeous ornaments of the Jewish priesthood, ascended the desk. This was Simeon, the second bishop of Jerusalem, who had succeeded to the vacant see about five years previously, when his brother James had been put to death by order of the high priest. Though he had now exceeded his eightieth year, he was hale and vigorous. Indeed, history records that he continued to preside over the infant Church for nearly forty years after this time, and at last died by martyrdom early in the reign of Trajan. Sivan, as he looked upon his noble and reverend features, thought he had never beheld a face that impressed him with a deeper sense of truth and purity. He listened attentively while the old man read out some sentences, which he instantly recognized as a part of the book of the prophet Isaiah, and which he had hitherto been in the habit of interpreting as prophetic of the sufferings of the Jews, under the foreign tyrants who should lead them into captivity. Having rolled up the parchment on which the extract was written, the preacher proceeded to expound the meaning of

what he had read: his discourse being addressed, as Sivan afterwards learnt, chiefly to the catechumens, or persons who were being prepared to receive baptism. He pointed out how all the signs and tokens of the future Messiah, as described by the prophet, had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. He showed how He had grown up from infancy to manhood "as a tender plant;" of an obscure and humble origin, whence nothing great seemed likely to arise, any more than "a root" might be expected "to grow out of a dry soil;" how there was nothing in His worldly station or appearance that inclined men to hearken to or follow Him, or give Him "dignity or comeliness" in their eyes, but, on the contrary, how "He was despised and rejected of men," His fellow-countrymen treating Him with contempt, His own kindred refusing to hearken to Him; how He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," suffering all His life from scorn and calumny, having no settled home nor means of subsistence; how, once more, He was meek and patient under His afflictions, "was oppressed, yet opened not His mouth;" nor ever attempted to requite injury, any more than the lamb resents the violence of its slayer; how He was "taken from prison" with scarce the form of trial, and was "cut off" by a cruel death "from the land of the living;" and, lastly, how "He had made His grave" with the malefactors who had suffered the penalty of their crimes on Calvary, and how He had rested in death in the grave of the rich counsellor of Arimathea. Then, quitting this branch of the subject, he proceeded to prove that these humiliations and sufferings of the Messiah were necessary, in order to reconcile man to God, and put away the

condemnation of human kind. All, he said, having like sheep gone astray, there needed a spotless victim—such as none of the offspring of Adam could be—to make atonement to Eternal Justice. Therefore had God Himself come down in the likeness and substance of man, in order that “He might be bruised for us;” that “upon Him might be laid the iniquity of us all,” and “by His stripes we might be healed.” The discourse concluded with a few words of affectionate practical exhortation.

Sivan listened with a deep and growing interest. He could not but acknowledge that the interpretation he had hitherto assigned to the prophecies just quoted was in itself vague and unsatisfactory; and the closeness of the application he had just heard, the vivid reality of the images when brought out by this new mode of explanation, and the vigour, beauty, and comprehensiveness of the entire argument, struck him with overwhelming force. He felt his rooted prejudice against these men, whom he had hitherto regarded as innovators on the ancient faith of Israel, soften and yield, as sentence after sentence flowed from the lips of the almost inspired preacher. The morality, too, of the teaching, how different it was from what he had always heard attributed to these Christians; how lofty and pure, yet how simple, appeared to be their rule of practice. He looked with the most eager attention to see what would next follow.

The old man had scarcely descended from the desk, when another person rose in his place, whose appearance seemed to cause a great sensation among the audience. He was a much younger man, as was evident from the vigour and activity of his move-

ments; but his face bore traces of strong emotion and anxious thought, which had stamped it with the aspect of premature age. His hair, scanty and grizzled, hung in wild locks over a lofty expanse of forehead, furrowed with deep wrinkles; and his sunken eyes shone with a fire, that might have given the idea of a disordered intellect, but for the dignity of his attitude and the composure of his features. Sivan was deeply struck by his appearance. He could almost have fancied that Elijah the Tishbite stood before him, even as he had appeared when denouncing the guilt of Ahab; or that Jeremiah had risen from the grave to mourn anew over the woes of his countrymen; and he waited with breathless interest for the discourse which was about to be delivered.

The occupant of the desk stood profoundly silent and motionless for several minutes, with his face turned upwards, and his eyes fixed apparently on some object far beyond the limit of the grotto in which the worshippers were assembled. Presently, his aspect altered; his limbs were agitated with convulsive throbs, and his features were distorted as if with some inward agony. After a while his lips unclosed, and a few broken sounds, which afterwards became more coherent and distinct, flowed from them. His attitude again became fixed, and his features composed, as those of a marble image; nor did he appear to be in the least affected by the strange volumes of sound which he rapidly poured forth. Sivan listened with increasing wonder. Not a sound that he could catch conveyed any meaning to his ear; nor was the speaker, to judge from the faces of the congregation generally, more intelligible to them. The discourse must either be

couched in some foreign language—which, however, was most unlikely, for Sivan was well acquainted with all the languages familiarly known to the Jews, and the present assembly was not one in which there was likely to be an unusual display of learning—or it must be a mere string of unmeaning sounds, a supposition he would certainly have adopted, had it not been for the reverent awe with which the speaker was listened to, and the general character of the assembly; which bore not the slightest appearance of extravagance or folly. After the rhapsody had proceeded for a few minutes, it came to an end as strangely as it had begun. The speaker came to an abrupt pause; drew his mantle over his head, like one dazzled and wearied by looking on some overpowering light; and quitting the desk, retired to his seat, where he sat down motionless and seemingly exhausted.

There was a long pause when he ceased, and then the old man, who had delivered the previous discourse, again rose. “Brethren,” he said, “the Lord hath vouchsafed to us, through our brother Issachar, some revelation of His pleasure as concerneth us. Hath any among you received the interpretation thereof?”

A second pause of even longer duration ensued, which was at last broken by a youth, of scarcely twenty years of age, in whom Sivan recognized Hermas, the prisoner whom he had saved from the fury of the multitude a few days previously, and whom he had followed an hour ago to the present spot.

“Venerable Simeon,” he said, rising as he spoke, “our chief and father in Christ, God hath given

me the understanding of my brother's words—me, the youngest and least worthy of His servants, even as it is written, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength.' Hearken, then, thus saith the Lord: Behold the day of the desolation of Jerusalem hath come, and her cup is filled, and is about to overflow. Already have the signs of the Lord's coming been multiplied. False Christs have risen on every side; wars and rumours of wars fill the whole earth; famines, earthquakes, and pestilences every where appal men's hearts; and, lo! the sign that the end is no longer nigh, but hath begun, is even now manifested. 'The abomination that maketh desolate,' the idolatrous standard which hovereth in the van of Roman carnage and destruction, hath been planted 'over against the holy place itself.' Wherefore let the faithful remember the words of the Lord, how that He said, 'When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed by armies, know that the desolation thereof is nigh; and when ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains.' And for this end hath God made foolish the wisdom of the heathen, and caused him to turn back his armies in the day of battle, and made the victor to fly even in the moment of victory, that the elect might have space to flee to the mountains, and be saved. Remember, again, how the Lord said, 'Not a hair of your head shall perish.' Wherefore take heed, and flee, and tarry not; for now is the appointed time, now is the 'day of salvation.' "

As he concluded the whole assembly fell on their

knees, and exclaimed, with one voice, "Blessed be the name of the Lord, for all the mercies that He bestoweth upon us!"

Simeon then arose. "Brethren," he said, "the prophecy and the interpretation agree well with what those amongst us who have been gifted with prophetic discernment, have from the first declared—how that before the generation which beheld the Lord's ministry on earth should pass away, the Lord Himself should return to avenge His own, and destroy this guilty city. Ye have also heard—the most of you—our beloved brethren, Peter, and Andrew, and John, relate, how He spake the same to them on the evening before His betrayal: as also our brother Matthew hath recorded in the writing he hath left with us. Now, then, let there be no delay in fulfilling the Lord's commands. He hath provided for us a place of refuge, even the hill country beyond the Jordan; and He hath ordained that our flight shall not take place in the winter, nor yet on the Sabbath day, as He bade us pray that it might not. He hath also been pleased so to dispose the course of events, that they that persecute us in this city should all be absent from it at this juncture, having gone forth this morning in pursuit of the enemy, nor will they return for some days. Let every one, then, retire to his own home, and gather together his household, and prepare to depart before the sun that is now shining in the heavens, shall set. Nor let any tarry, or look back, lest they perish, like Lot's wife. Remember once more, how the Lord said, 'Let him that is on the housetop not come down to take any

thing out of the house; neither let him that is in the field return back to take his clothes.' "

As he finished, the assembly gave evident signs of immediate dispersion, and Sivan had barely time to return through the vaulted entrance, and issuing from the sepulchre, conceal himself in the cedar-grove; before the whole throng of worshippers came forth with hasty steps, and took the path that led to the city. The venerable Simeon, whose advanced age made his movements slower than those of the others, was the last to appear; and Sivan, who had been eagerly watching for him for some time, supposed that he must have escaped his observation amid the general crowd. At last, when all the rest had disappeared in the distance, the old man issued forth, leaning on the arm of Hermas, who, as a stranger in Jerusalem, had no preparations to make, and was therefore selected as the fittest attendant of the aged bishop. As they proceeded slowly up the valley, Sivan suddenly emerged from the grove, and stood before them.

"Old man," said he, "unintentionally I have been witness of all that hath passed in the subterranean cavern, which thou hast just quitted, and I resolved at once to seek thee, and question thee concerning certain things which thou hast said."

The Christian glanced at Sivan's dress, which indicated that its wearer was a priest of the temple, and a member of the Sanhedrin. "My brother," said he, "I know not for what purpose thou seekest me. If to bring me to trial and punishment for the sake of the Lord Jesus, thou art welcome; if to learn the

truth that He came on earth to teach, thou art yet more welcome. Peace be between me and thee, whatsoever be thy errand or purpose."

"My father," interposed Hermas, "this is the stranger, respecting whom I told thee, who saved me from the fury of the people, and dismissed me with words of kindness, when all else spake nothing but malediction and reproaches. Earnestly have I prayed that the Lord might reward him, and my heart tells me that even now my prayers have been heard."

"It is even so, good youth," answered Sivan. "I cannot say that I yet believe in thy faith, but I would fain learn more respecting it. Do thou, O venerable Simeon, be my teacher! and may the God of my fathers open my eyes to perceive His truth, whatsoever it may be."

Simeon hesitated. "May God forbid," he said, "that I should reject thee, my son! But if thou wert present just now, thou must have heard how that the Lord hath commanded all who call upon the name of His Son, to flee without an hour's delay from this city, which is doomed to speedy overthrow and ruin. Art thou prepared to fly with us, and cast thy lot with ours? If so, gladly will we in our new homes teach thee the truth as it is in Him, whose great mercy hath even now moved thee to seek Him."

Sivan's brow was troubled. "If danger and suffering," said he, "are hanging over my country, it cannot become me, one of her priests and rulers, to desert her in her hour of need, unless I were fully assured that God Himself had commanded me to do

so, and that, as thou knowest, I have yet to learn."

Simeon shook his head. "I cannot disobey the will of the Lord," said he, "even to save a soul. And when the Lord commands His people to flee from Jerusalem, surely their bishop must be with them to guide, comfort, and support them by the way."

Hermas again interposed. "My father," he said, "may I speak without presumption? Thou canst not, indeed, tarry in this city. The flock cannot spare their pastor when they are driven forth from the fold. But thou knowest the word of prophecy respecting me, which my father in the faith spake to me at Antioch in his dying hour. I will pray thee to suffer me to remain behind. I am a mere stranger in this city, without kindred or servants that need my presence or assistance. Surely the Lord, who hath thus far answered my prayers, hath given me this work to perform."

Simeon looked upon the noble countenance glowing with courage and devotion. "The Lord hath spoken by thee, my son," he said. "Remain; and may His blessing be upon thee! Stranger, this youth will accompany me to my home, and then he will follow thee whithersoever thou leadest."

CHAPTER XII.

Look round about on this once populous town !
Not one of these innumerable housetops
But hides some spectral form of misery,
Some peevish, pining child, and moaning mother,
Some aged man that in his dotage scolds,
Not knowing why he hungers, some cold corse
That lies unstraightened where the spirit left it.

TAYLOR.

NEARLY five years had elapsed since the flight of the Christians from Jerusalem. The siege of the city, which had been commenced by Titus in the spring of the previous year, was now approaching its termination: but the defence was still maintained with the most obstinate and unflinching courage. After repeated assaults, in which the Romans, little used as they were to defeat, had been driven back with severe loss, the tower of Antonia had been captured by surprise. Two furious assaults had followed on the Outer Courts of the Temple, which now lay close to the Roman position. But on each occasion, after an entire day passed in a hand-to-hand conflict in the narrow space between the tower and the cloisters of the Outer Court, the imperial troops had been forced to retire; and the heaps of dead bodies wearing the armour of Roman legionaries, which cumbered the scene of

battle, showed that the invincible legions which had swept almost unopposed over the vast continent of Asia, had at length encountered an enemy whose native valour and determination were even greater than their own. Wearied out, and perhaps dispirited, by the havoc made among his choicest soldiers by the swords of the Jews, Titus had desisted awhile from active hostilities, and had employed several days in constructing embankments in front of the Antonia; from the summit of which he hoped that the formidable barrier, which the outer wall of the Temple presented, might be successfully assailed. Another attempt to storm it had been made as soon as the works were completed, in the course of which the Court of the Gentiles had been captured and destroyed by fire; but the Court of the Israelites, and the Sanctuary within it, were still held by the Jews with the same dogged determination which they had evinced from the commencement of the siege.

It was an hour or so before noon, on the day succeeding the destruction of the Court of the Gentiles, when two men might have been seen leaning over the inner wall of the city near the tower of Hippicus. For several hundred yards near them the fortifications were almost deserted, and such soldiers as had been stationed along them, were buried in the deep sleep of fatigue, or perhaps intoxication. The two men looked long and mournfully at the scene spread out before them. At no great distance lay the wall of circumvallation with which Titus had enclosed the city, like a huge serpent enfolding the doomed multitudes in its deadly embrace. In front of this was exhibited the hideous spectacle of thousands of dead and dying

wretches, nailed upon crosses in every conceivable attitude of weakness and agony; whom the inflexible vengeance of Rome had consigned to a lingering death. Behind, to the north and west, gleamed the endless array of tents in which the Roman army was encamped; the precise order and exactitude in which they were arranged, affording in itself a forcible picture of the discipline and warlike temper which had made the Romans the lords of the world; and the overwhelming number, that stretched out into the distance as far as the eye could follow, affording a yet more unquestionable evidence of the hopelessness of ultimate resistance. Closer to, indeed under the very walls of the city, might be seen a yet more terrible sign of the power of Rome, and the madness of opposition to her. For several hundred feet from the base of the ramparts the whole ground was occupied with innumerable corpses, flung hastily, and without the smallest attempt at the decencies of interment, over the parapets. There they lay, old and young, rich and poor, armed soldier and delicate woman, crowded together in undistinguishable heaps, one frightful mass of corruption, too horrible for the eye to rest upon, and tainting the air with odours that seemed the very breath of pestilence. Man has never looked, and, it may fully be believed, he will never again look, on such a spectacle.

After a long interval of silence the elder of the two addressed his companion. "See you," said he, "yonder level space, about half-way up the ascent of Calvary? It is at that spot that our fathers say that the Saviour sank beneath the weight of the Cross, and Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to bear its lower

limb after Him. Lo, now it is occupied by many crosses instead of one; and they who are nailed to them are of that nation, it may be some of those very men who followed Him up that mournful ascent, and mocked at the agony under which He sank. And there, too, is the spot where He bade the daughters of Jerusalem ‘weep for themselves and for their children.’ The echo of these words seems to be ever sounding in the streets of Jerusalem! Hath ever prophecy had so complete or so sad a fulfilment?”

“Yea,” answered Hermas, “I was wont to think that the deeds which our fathers did in the green tree were so full of guilt and horror, that nought of after-wickedness could exceed them; but, verily and indeed, the guilt and the horror seems as nothing, when compared with the deeds which this unhappy race hath done, and is now doing, in the dry. How man can look upon that which thou and I, O Adonijah! have seen, and yet live, the great mercy of God can alone account for! All the horrors of war, all the abominations of civil strife, all the sufferings of famine, all the agonies of pestilence that mankind, in their greatest seasons of affliction, have endured from the beginning of time, have been concentrated in tenfold severity upon this one generation! The desolating sword by day, the knife of the assassin by night, the grinding hunger of the solitary chamber, and the loathsome pestilence of the crowded street, seem to vie with each other in inflicting misery. Yea, the Lord hath brought upon this one nation all the plagues wherewith He hath ever visited any who have rebelled against Him —the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, ay, and the noisome beast; for surely they who hold rule in

this city are more hateful and destructive monsters than the locust or the palmerworm. And yet more wonderful is it, how thou and I have hitherto escaped the daily perils that have environed us!"

"True," said Sivan, "God hath preserved us to do His special work. His name be praised, many are they whom we have saved, not only from death, but from the curse that hangs over those who reject their Lord; and who are now in safety with our brethren at Pella. But the time draws nigh when our work will come to an end. Fierce and determined as our countrymen are, resistance cannot be protracted much longer. Wilt not thou now, dear Hermas, hearken to my oft-repeated entreaties, and fly from this city? God, who hath blessed our attempts to rescue those who have believed in His Son, will surely aid thee, as He has them. Thou knowest that, while nearly all those who have attempted to escape the vigilance of the Roman guards have perished miserably at their hands, not one of our converts but has safely effected his flight, even as it is written, 'Not a hair shall fall from any of your heads.' Once more, wilt thou not depart? This very night, unless I am deceived, the attack will be renewed; and, with the powerful engines which the enemy can now bring to bear, resistance must soon be at an end. Thy work is done, and it were no faithfulness, but rashness and folly, to linger here."

"Not so, Adonijah," answered Hermas; "hast thou forgotten that summer morning, but two days before our departure to join our brethren at Pella? Dost thou recollect what I told thee—how that an aged martyr, my father in the faith, and one of the many

victims of heathen cruelty, on the very morning of his translation to glory, told me that I should seal my testimony with my blood, even as he would ; yet not in Antioch, but in Jerusalem ? ‘ My son,’ said he, for the words will remain ever engraven in my memory, ‘ child of my ancient friend, fear not, the sword of the enemy shall drink thy blood, as it will mine ; and the crown that thou shalt wear, is the same that I am crowned withal. Yet linger not in this city, for it is the city of Zion that the Lord hath appointed for thy labours and for their consummation.’ But for thee, O Adonijah, let me turn thine argument against thyself. Surely, if thou deemest my work in this city to be ended—so is thine—and remember, if the life of Hermas be treasured by some, that of Adonijah is precious to many.”

Sivan was evidently embarrassed. “ Urge it not,” said he, “ my friend ; I, too, know full surely from a source that I may not tell thee of, but to which thou wouldest defer implicitly if thou knewest it, that neither shall I ever quit this city. Were it not that this work had been given me—to rescue some of these miserable souls from the darkness that overspreads this unhappy land, which is deeper and darker, as I think, than has ever rested upon any heathen nation—I had not accompanied thee in the spring of last year, when thou didst feel thyself impelled by the Holy Spirit to return hither; nay, I had long ere this been summoned away. But I have been spared, that I may bring them into the glorious light of the Gospel, whose day-star is now rising in the east, and whose noonday brightness shall illumine the whole earth. Yea,” murmured he to

himself, in a tone so low that his companion could not catch it, "I myself shall behold the fulness of that noontide lustre; and this time, blessed be God for it, there can be no illusion or disappointment. Is it not written, 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising;' and 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea?' But enough," he resumed in a more audible tone, "it is time that thou and I resume our rounds, and see what work the Lord hath this day appointed for us to do."

They descended from the walls, and repaired first to the house of Sivan. Here, closing the doors, they proceeded cautiously to raise a flagstone in the floor, which gave access to a secret chamber; in which Sivan, early in the siege, when he perceived the approach of famine, had collected large stores of provisions, now nearly exhausted. Taking a considerable part of what remained they concealed it carefully under their garments: and then again quitting the house, entered one of the narrowest streets situated in the lower city. It was with difficulty they could make their way along it, so thickly was it piled with corpses in every stage of corruption. Some of these gave horrible proof, in their thin and wasted limbs, that they had perished by famine; others, blue and swollen, were as manifestly the victims of the pestilence; that with the sword and the famine formed the threefold scourge of Jerusalem. Not a living being was to be seen abroad. Occasionally the low cry of pain, or the sharp entreaty for food, uttered by some childish voice, that sounded more like the shrill treble of old age, woke the echo of the silent street. Used as they

had long been to these mournful sights and sounds, they could not forbear an exclamation of horror as they witnessed them. “ ‘The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of its mouth for thirst,’ ” muttered Sivan : “ ‘the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them ; they that be slain by the sword are better than they that be slain by hunger, for these pine away stricken through for lack of the fruits of the field.’ ”

They reached a house situated about the middle of the street ; and, passing through the porch, entered the chamber that lay immediately to the right. Seated on the ground, with her hair wild and dishevelled, but with a stony look in her large dark eyes, was a woman of about twenty years of age, who, but for her wasted features and attenuated limbs, would have been eminently beautiful. On her lap lay two children, twins it would seem, about two years old, which she had carefully enfolded in her garment ; but which, as a single glance showed her visitors, were both dead. She looked up as they entered, and even in that terrible hour of desolation a faint expression of joy and affection came over her pallid features.

“ Zillah, my daughter, how is this ? ” said Sivan ; “ when we saw thee but a few days since, we left thy little ones well and thriving. The pestilence does not seem to have visited thy house. What hath slain them ? ”

The woman unclosed her lips, and uttered the one word, “ Hunger.”

“ Hunger ! ” exclaimed Hermas hastily. “ Did we not leave with thee three days’ supply of food ? May God forgive us if we neglected thee ; but surely I had thought that thou didst receive it.”

"Yea," said the woman in the same tone as before, "thou didst leave it. The blessing of the stricken mother be upon thee: the fault is not thine! But scarcely had thy foot departed from my house, when armed men broke into it, and tore from us by violence all our hoard. I prayed them but to leave us enough to sustain life for one day more; but they were deaf to my prayer. I implored them to slay one of my darlings, and take that in place of food; so that they left me enough to sustain the other; but they hearkened not. I sat down after they departed, and prayed thou mightest return sooner than thy wont. The Lord seemed to have heard my prayer, for the babes lived on all through yesterday; and it was but this morning that I read in their faces that they must eat or die. I rose up and went forth in the hope that I might find ye—ye, the only human beings in this city, in whose hearts God hath left any print of Himself; but my search was vain. I returned an hour since, and found them as thou seest. May the curse of the childless and desolate—"

"Hush, my daughter," said Sivan, "thou knowest how the Lord said, 'Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;' and thou knowest the blessing that belongeth to those who do so." He seated himself by her side, and began to speak to her in low and gentle tones of the great Healer of every sorrow, whose name he had already made known to her, and had found no unwilling auditor. Long and earnestly did he discourse, and Zillah gradually lost her vacant look and burst into a passion of tears. These again grew calmer, as Sivan spoke of Him who had borne all sorrow for her sake, and would give her

peace, and rest, and reunion with those whom she had lost, if she anchored her faith on Him. Meanwhile Hermas with the help of a sword which had fallen from the hand of some dying wretch near the threshold, proceeded to scoop a shallow grave in the courtyard of the house ; and then gently disengaging the infant corpses from their mother's embrace, laid them reverently in the earth with a brief prayer, and again heaped the earth over them. Then Sivan rose to depart.

" My daughter," he said, " fly, if thou canst, from this city, and seek the hill country beyond the Jordan. Shouldst thou ever reach the town of Pella, whither our brethren in the faith have escaped, give this token to Simeon, and he will admit thee to the membership of the faithful. I have already pointed out to thee the secret way beneath the eastern wall, by which many of those who have been, as thou, brought to the knowledge of the Redeemer, have safely accomplished their flight. Doubt not, but believe, that the Lord will protect thee also. But should He, in His wisdom, decree for thee, not life but death, let thy last prayer be offered to Him who alone can save thee." He pressed her hand and quitted the house.

We will not follow them through the remainder of that day's melancholy travel, which lay amid scenes of misery, horror, and despair, that exceeded all that the imagination could picture ; and the sight of which nothing but the high-strung and divinely-supported faith of the Christian could have enabled them to sustain. Wearied out at last, and sick at heart, in spite of all the constancy which the discipline of years had fostered and confirmed, with all their provisions ex-

hausted, and literally incapable of enduring the sight of the fearful suffering which they could not alleviate, Sivan and Hermas emerged from the narrow streets, and took the way to the Temple.

The two outer courts which, during the earlier part of the siege, had been severally occupied by the troops of Simon and of John, who waged a more furious war against each other than against their Roman besiegers, had of late been deserted by these occupants, and lay once more open to the people. It was now, as the sunbeams sloping from the west apprised them, nearly three o'clock, the hour of the evening sacrifice; which through the midst of all the distractions of want, bloodshed, and pestilence, had been, until within the last few days, regularly kept up. As they approached the southern entrance they perceived a crowd of Jews issuing from it, tearing their garments, and flinging dust upon their heads as they went. "Woe, woe!" they exclaimed, "the woe denounced by the prophet Daniel; for the sacrifice in the Temple hath ceased. Famine hath so consumed our stores, that not a beast can be found of which a sacrifice may be made; and the sword hath so thinned the children of Zion, that not a priest remains to offer the sacrifice, even could that be found."

As they spoke a distant shout was heard, and presently several men appeared, one of whom bore in his arms a lamb, which had been discovered in a distant quarter of the city. "The Lord hath provided a sacrifice," they cried, "it only needeth now that we find a priest." At that moment one of the party caught sight of Sivan, who, though he had laid aside his priestly robes,

since his conversion to Christianity, was well known in Jerusalem, as having been one of the chief priests of the Temple. The man instantly raised a shout of exultation. "See," he cried, "the Lord hath provided the priest also! All hail, Adonijah Ben-Hamuel, the hour hath come and the victim is ready, come thou, and perform the sacrifice!"

Before Sivan could refuse, or indeed before he could utter a word in reply, he and Hermas were seized on by the frantic multitude, and having been borne through the outer passages of the Temple, were set down within the Court of the Priests, near the altar of burnt-offerings. Sivan had never entered it since his interview with Simeon, and even at this moment of intense excitement and confusion, he could not help noting the marvellous change that had taken place in it. The beautiful court that had been kept with such scrupulous care and neatness, was now disfigured with every species of filth and rubbish. Large fragments of stone, dashed off by the missiles hurled from the catapults, lay in heaps beneath the cloisters. The pure whiteness of the wall was blackened in many places by fire. The stainless marble pavement which the priests themselves never trod otherwise than with bare feet, was discoloured by innumerable stains of human blood; and more frightful than all, the shrine of the Merciful itself was cumbered with heaps of dead bodies; some of them slain by the weapons of the besiegers, but the greater part massacred in treachery and cold blood by the daggers of their own countrymen. So hideous and mournful was the change, that Sivan himself, though he knew that it was but the just penalty

that his unhappy nation had incurred, and had been wrought by the finger of God alone, could not help groaning aloud over the desolation and defilement of what had been, for so many centuries, the dwelling-place of the Almighty.

Hermas, whose feelings were similar, but whose temper was warmer and more impetuous, broke forth into loud exclamations: totally unheeding, or perhaps disregarding, the presence of the multitude. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he exclaimed, "thou slayer of the prophets and murderer of Him that was sent unto thee, verily and indeed thy house is left unto thee desolate! Thou, who hadst no mercy on those who would have saved thee, behold thou art handed over to those to whom mercy is unknown. Yet a few days and that other, and more awful saying of the Lord Jesus, shall come to pass, and not one stone of this stately house shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The crowd heard him with blank amazement that rendered them for the time incapable of speech or action. At last with a wild cry their fury burst forth. "Blasphemy, blasphemy," they shouted, "blasphemy in the very Court and Temple of the Lord: let the impious voice be quenched in its own blood!"

At the same moment another cry was heard, as the lamb that was being led to the altar, suddenly fell dead on the pavement. A deep silence of awe and perplexity again fell upon the multitude as this new portent presented itself. At last a single voice was heard. "The Lord hath taken away the sacrifice, because He would have the blasphemer offered in its room." The suggestion was instantly caught up.

Hermas was seized and bound in a moment, and hurried forward with frantic haste to the foot of the altar of burnt-offerings ; while one of the crowd seizing the knife from the altar thrust it into the hand of Sivan, and commanded him to consummate the sacrifice. Horror-struck at an impiety that exceeded any he had as yet witnessed, Sivan cast the knife from him, and implored the bystanders to spare their souls from the guilt of so fearful a deed. "If ye will have his life," he exclaimed, "for the testimony which he hath borne to his Saviour, he does not refuse to die : but not here, surely not here, so near to the spot where the Mercy-Seat itself hath stood, and the visible presence of Almighty Justice hath been displayed ; surely ye will not defile your souls with so dark and indelible a stain."

His words only roused the multitude to greater fury.

"Thou too, old man, thou too art a blasphemer of the God of Israel ; thou shalt be the next victim, at the hour of morning sacrifice to-morrow, as thy companion in guilt shall be the evening sacrifice of to-day. Thus doth the God of Israel supply the place of the sacrifices that have failed, with victims more welcome to Him—the apostate and the infidel."

Sivan struggled in vain ; for despite of the blessedness of the martyrdom which his friend was about to undergo, it was impossible to look upon a deed so flagitious, without striving to prevent it. He was overpowered ; his hands secured by cords ; and in this manner, held forcibly by two soldiers, he was compelled with an infernal refinement in cruelty, to witness the murder of his friend. Dimly, for the whole scene

seemed to reel before him, he beheld Hermas voluntarily, and with a firm tread, ascend the steps leading to the place of sacrifice ; his eye caught the glitter of the knife as it rose in the air, and marked the blood spout forth over the polluted altar ; then, with a deep groan of horror, he sank insensible to the ground, and was in this state conveyed by his guards to a place of safe custody.

CHAPTER XIII.

E'en they, when high above the dusty fight
Their burning Temple rose in lurid light,
To their lov'd altars paid a parting groan,
And in their country's woes forgot their own.
As 'mid the cedar courts and gates of gold,
The trampled ranks in miry carnage rolled,
To save their Temple every hand essayed,
And with cold fingers grasped the feeble blade.

HEBER.

WHEN Sivan recovered his senses, he found that the spot in which he had been placed for security was the portico of the Sanctuary. This part of the Temple was esteemed so sacred, that none but the priests were permitted to enter it; but in the disorders of the last few months all reverence for these distinctions had been lost, and with the single exception of the Holy of Holies, every part of the Temple was freely trodden by all who chose it. Those who had the custody of Sivan had not only manacled his hands and feet, but had further secured him by a chain attached to an iron girdle, passing round his waist, the other end of which was locked to a massive ring in the wall. These precautions they had considered fully sufficient to prevent the possibility of escape, and they had not

therefore regarded it as necessary to place any guard to watch his movements.

He rose and looked around him. Over his head the walls were inlaid with plates of gold, and hung with treasures of untold value, the gifts of kings and princes. Behind him, veiling the doors of the Holy Place, was suspended the costly Babylonian veil with its rich colours of scarlet and blue, purple and white, emblematic of the four elements ; and embroidered with devices descriptive of the universe. At his feet lay the Court of the Israelites, crowded with the living and the dead ; and it was hard to say which of them presented the more melancholy spectacle. Notwithstanding the moral certainty of their approaching doom, and the terrible vengeance which the sword of Rome would be sure to exact, not a trace of fear or even doubt could be discerned on any face. They were still evidently possessed with the notion that no heathen nation would ultimately be allowed to prevail against the people of God ; and that even in the last extremity, their Deliverer would descend and wither the whole host of the invaders with a single glance. Nor were there wanting those who, either from real fanaticism or deep and calculating hypocrisy, nursed and fed these visionary hopes. Numerous groups might be seen, each gathered round some pretended prophet, who declared that the hour of retribution was at hand ; that the great Preserver of the people of Israel was even now arming for the conflict ; and that the moment that the idolatrous Gentiles should set foot on the pavement of the Sanctuary, He would appear in all His terror, and scatter the legions of Rome with a slaughter so terrible, that not one should

survive. From these, his eyes wandered to the altar of burnt-offerings, on the steps of which he could clearly discern the corpse of his friend, lying in the same attitude in which he had fallen. How strange a contrast between the living and the dead!—the one glowing with feverish and delusive phantasies, soon to experience the most terrible awakening: the other reposing peacefully and calmly in the fruition of his eternal hopes. Sivan could not but envy his friend, and feel a yearning to share his lot. But he knew well this could not be. It was clear to him that the same Providence which had granted him a lot so different to that of all human kind, intended him to fulfil it. He felt he must live once more to behold—what he had so long desired to look upon—the perfecting of his fellow-men in love, and mercy, and obedience; through the divine teaching of that revelation which, late in time, had been vouchsafed to the world. “Order and government,” he soliloquized, “may conduce to human happiness, but they may be wrested to human misery. Liberty and patriotism, priceless blessings in themselves, may yet be abused to oppression and the most sordid selfishness. Yea, the law itself, though the more visible gift of God, was but a schoolmaster against whom its scholars have oftentimes rebelled. But the Gospel—that can alone change the heart,—that cannot and will not fail! It will go with irresistible strength from the east to the west, from the north to the south; ‘violence shall no more be heard in thy land, O earth, nor wasting nor destruction within thy borders; thy people also shall be *all* righteous, and they shall inherit the land for ever!’ Wherefore then should I

be cast down? Surely it were no great calamity again to visit this world, and behold the glory of the Lord fully revealed, and the perfection of man's nature consummated—yes, to visit it again, when the Gospel shall have been preached in all lands, and the Church shall be every where triumphant! And then shall I pray to depart in peace, for mine eyes will have seen His salvation!"

As he spoke his eye wandered farther off to the battlements of the upper city, which lay directly opposite to him, glowing in all the radiance of the setting sun. The lofty walls and massive towers, built with wonderful skill of stone, white and pure as marble, and bristling with armed men, presented a goodly spectacle: and so great appeared to be their strength, that it was difficult to believe that—when garrisoned by such determined defenders—even the might of Rome could prevail against them. But Sivan knew otherwise. "'The days,' muttered he to himself, 'shall come upon thee, that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.' Thou trustest in thy strong walls and thy lofty towers, but 'except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it.' Thou reliest on the valour and resolution of thy children, but 'except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.' "

He seated himself as near the entrance of the building as the length of his chain permitted him to do, and sat long and mournfully watching the shadows of evening creep over the devoted city, as the sun lin-

gered for the last time upon the glittering pinnacles of the Temple. "It was upon this very day," said he, "six hundred and fifty years ago, that the Assyrian general, even as it might be at this hour, encamped his legions for the night, and bade them prepare in the morning to lay waste, and utterly destroy, the glorious Temple which Solomon had built. Even then, methinks, the sun must have shone but sadly upon that noble pile, which it would never again illuminate with its glory—yet sadder is the final ray that he sheds this evening; for to the first sanctuary there should come a rising from its ruins, and to the banished people, a return and a restoration; but for this Temple and Nation, when shall their curse be taken away, or their glory return?"

The night deepened, and the moon and stars appeared, concealing with their softened lustre the ravages which the fury of man or the wasting fire had caused, and restoring to the shattered courts their original beauty. Sivan still lingered at the same spot. His countrymen lay, for the most part, asleep, scattered up and down the Court of the Israelites; but with their swords naked in their grasps, prepared for immediate action, when any alarm should be given. At a little distance might be heard the murmur of conversation, maintained by those who garrisoned the western wall, and were watching the movements of the enemy. Farther off he could catch the more subdued sounds of preparation, where the Romans were making ready for the final assault on the following morning. Despite the intense excitement and anxiety of the occasion, Sivan felt a drowsiness creeping over him, and he was fast sinking to sleep, when he was roused by a strange

and confused noise ; which proceeded neither from the Roman lines, nor the Jewish garrison, nor from the multitudes that occupied the Court of the Israelites, but from the Interior, as it seemed, of the Sanctuary itself. The tramp of feet, as of a numerous train of servants preparing to marshal forth a royal procession, was audible through the golden gates, and the veil which hung over them ; and voices were indistinctly heard, as of persons issuing orders for departure. Sivan started to his feet. An unutterable awe came over him ; and the sense of the Near Presence of something supernatural and unearthly induced him to cast himself on the pavement, with his face to the ground. As he lay thus muffled in his mantle, the noises grew louder and more distinct ; and at length a deep and solemn Voice, that thrilled through every chamber of Sivan's heart, was heard to exclaim, from the innermost recesses of the shrine, " Let us depart hence !" Immediately, as with the rush of a mighty wind, the golden gates flew open, the veil parted asunder, and the echo of countless feet was heard passing slowly through the portico, and issuing into the space beyond. Presently the sounds ceased ; the gates shut as noiselessly as they had opened ; the veils fell once more in folds before them, and a profound silence pervaded the Sanctuary.

Deeply impressed by what he had heard and witnessed, Sivan remained in the same attitude, with his face concealed in his mantle. He had lain thus, it might be for an hour, buried in deep and solemn meditation, when he was aroused by a hand upon his shoulder. He looked up. A female figure, shrouded in a long black garment, stood at his side. " Ado-

nijah, my father !” she said, in a low whisper, “ I have come to save thee from death, even as thou hast many a time rescued me. I heard of thy capture, and the murder of thy friend and mine, who is now in the glory of his Lord. I learned in whose custody was the key of thy fetters, and stole it from him as he slept. Rise, and let me loose thee from thy bonds, and we will flee together from this abode of destruction.”

“ The Lord will requite thee, my daughter,” said Sivan. “ I may not fly with thee, indeed; but thy reward will not be the less.” As he spoke, he rose from the ground, and with Zillah’s aid loosed first his hands, and then his waist and feet, from the chains. He stepped into the doorway of the portico. It was still deep night, and the occupants of the court below were hushed in slumber.

“ Surely, my father,” exclaimed Zillah, in her low tones, “ thou wilt not refuse to accompany me ! Wherefore shouldst thou remain behind, to share the final doom of our unhappy people ? See, the multitudes below are buried in slumber, the outer gates that lead to the city stand open and unguarded, and the streets are wholly deserted. Heaven itself hath ordered all things for thine escape. Would not thy friend,” she pursued, seeing that her words made no impression upon her hearer, “ who lieth yonder, would not he have prayed thee to fly, had he now been standing at our side ? ”

Sivan glanced at the corpse upon the altar steps. A thought struck him. “ Come,” said he, “ Zillah, we have an office of love to discharge, and then may come the hour of departure. God will surely aid us to

fulfil this last duty to our friend." He descended the steps of the sanctuary, followed by Zillah, and proceeded to the spot where Hermas still lay in the same attitude in which he had expired. They lifted the slender corpse between them; and, unperceived or unheeded, passed through one of the southern gates, and along the empty streets, until they reached a small house, situated in the Tyropæon, as the valley between the upper and lower city was termed. Entering the house they raised a concealed door in one corner of the lowest story, which disclosed a rude stone staircase, leading to a subterranean passage, that ran beneath the valley of the Kedron. Here they paused to rest awhile; and then, resuming their task, traversed the secret passage for a considerable distance, until they emerged in one of the empty tombs in the valley of Jehoshaphat, similar to that in which Sivan had first beheld a Christian congregation assembled. In the vaults beneath this tomb the Christians had been in the habit of depositing their dead in times of persecution, and for this purpose the underground path had been constructed. As the point at which it issued at last lay beyond the Roman line of circumvallation, and was moreover deeply shrouded by clusters of cedars, it had afforded a safe means of escape to many of Sivan's converts. In this hallowed spot they laid the mutilated corpse of their friend, watering the sod with their tears, and pronouncing over him the beautiful words of the primitive liturgy of the Church. The ceremonial ended, they both knelt upon the new-made grave, and remained for some time absorbed in devotion. At length Sivan rose. "My daughter," said he, "it is time for thee to depart. But a few hours, and the

sword of the Roman will be let loose to slay, and the whole country round about Jerusalem will be filled with fugitives and their destroyers. Do not ask me to accompany thee," he continued, seeing that she was about to renew her entreaties; "it cannot be. Farewell. The Lord bless and preserve thee! We shall meet above!"

The stern resolution, blended with the kindness of his words, hushed Zillah into silence. She bowed herself before him, while he kissed her forehead; and then turning away without a single word, pursued the path that led to the fords of the Jordan.

Sivan also resumed his way to the city; and when he again emerged from the vaulted passage on his return, he found that he had not miscalculated the time; for the first glimmer of early dawn might now be seen over the chain of Olivet; and as he approached the southern gate of the temple, he could hear the fierce war-cry of the Romans, and the yet fiercer answers of his countrymen, which told him the assault had already commenced. He resumed his station beneath the gateway of the Sanctuary, and looked with mournful interest on the assault. Warned by his recent discomfitures, Titus had taken care to assail simultaneously every part of the northern and western lines of defence with large masses of his troops; and had employed his choicest soldiers in the attempt. Undismayed by the repeated failures of their comrades, the hardy veterans of Vespasian's wars planted a hundred scaling-ladders against the parapets; up which rushed a long line of mailed warriors, each holding, with his left hand, his shield over his head, and brandishing the short heavy sword of the legionary

in his right. The cloisters were already in flames in several places ; and the broad blaze streaming on the armour of the assailants through the volumes of pitchy smoke, gave each ladder with its mailed freight the appearance of a sheet of molten steel spouted forth from the bosom of a volcano. Up they poured, nerved with the excitement of fighting under the very eye of Cæsar, and eager to avenge the slaughter of their countrymen and the recent disgrace of the Roman arms. But they were met by a resistance so fierce and determined, as to appal even their tried and disciplined valour. Here and there the ladders were flung back by long beams pushed forward by the defenders ; though all who attempted this manœuvre fell dead almost immediately afterwards by the darts and arrows of the Roman reserve. Few of the assailants succeeded in effecting a lodgment on the battlements, and those few were speedily struck down by the Jewish garrison, and their mutilated corpses hurled down in derision among the Roman ranks. In vain was the voice of Titus heard entreating them to remember their ancient valour, and the shame which would cover their eagles, if in the very sight of Cæsar they again retreated from a barbarian foe : in vain did their most valiant officers, who had led them a hundred times to victory, incite them to fresh attempts ; and themselves head each new assault. Not an inch of ground was gained ; not one of the countless knots of assailants succeeded in establishing itself on the summit of the wall. At length, after several hours had elapsed in their abortive efforts, burning with rage and shame, Titus was forced to draw off his forces ; and issued orders that a treble number.

of scaling-ladders should be provided to renew the attack on the following morning, so that he might avail himself of the full advantage of his superior numbers. He also ordered that the flames, which were rapidly spreading over the inner cloisters, should be extinguished; as it had been throughout the siege his wish to spare, if possible, the magnificent Temple, which would be the noblest trophy of his victory.

And now it seemed as if the Jewish people, and the Holy House they had so heroically defended, would at least escape destruction for another day; and the dreaded anniversary of the overthrow of Solomon's Temple would be safely passed. But the irrevocable decree had gone forth; the day and the hour had been fixed, and who could gainsay it? Deceived by the retreat of their enemies, and supposing it to be a disorderly flight, the Jews rashly flung open their gates, and rushed on the legionaries who were employed by Titus's order in extinguishing the flames. Instantly availing himself of this indiscretion with that military skill which had gained him a world-wide celebrity, the Roman general commanded the signal of assault to be again sounded: and charging in full column the disorderly masses of the Jews, the imperial soldiers forced them to retreat within the open entrance, pressing in themselves in their rear. In vain was an attempt made to close the inner gate. The living tide that poured continuously through it, rendered this as impossible as it would have been to shut the flood-gates of a river against the sudden rush of a torrent. Every moment fresh bodies of the assailants made their way into the court, and every moment the

defenders who strove to thrust them back, were driven further and further from the entrance.

Sivan saw that all effectual resistance was at an end. Already the numbers of the assailants almost equalled that of the defenders of the Court; and the dense crowds which still continued to stream into it, would soon give them an overwhelming preponderance. Nor could this have escaped the notice of the Jews themselves. They too felt themselves hopelessly outnumbered and overmatched. But they showed no symptom of weakness or terror. Borne back by a host of foes and transfixed by unnumbered darts, the Lion of Judah resisted fiercely to the last. Not one cry for quarter, not one prayer for mercy, was heard amid the wild chorus of war-cries, and shrieks, and execrations that rent the very skies. Though the pavement was flooded ankle-deep in blood, and the slain piled in heaps one upon another, the Jews still continued to return blow for blow; and even in the moment of victory, the havoc made among the imperial troops was so great, that Titus more than once despatched messengers to order the advance of fresh squadrons to crush more effectually the protracted resistance which was still costing him the lives of hundreds of his bravest veterans.

At length when the conflict was at its height a soldier actuated by a sudden impulse, seized a brand from the burning cloisters, and hurled it through an open window of the Holy Place. It flew far into the building—was arrested by the folds of the rich Babylonian veil—and in an instant a brilliant blaze of light, that illuminated every corner of the Holy Place, announced that the Sanctuary itself was in

flames. A shriek of agony and despair broke from a thousand lips. The sight was, as it were, the counter-spell to the indomitable spirit by which the Jews had hitherto been possessed. Up to this moment they had persisted in believing that even in the most utter extremity, their great Protector would interpose to save them; and that any attempt to offer violence to the Holy House itself would be followed by some direct manifestation of divine anger. But the spectacle of the flames curling in ruddy wreaths round the carved woodwork of the roof, and reflected back by the golden plates with which the walls of the portico were overlaid, dispelled at last their illusion. With it vanished the fiery valour and determination that had so long upheld them. Casting away their swords, they sought in every direction for escape from their merciless enemies, or fell butchered like sheep, without outcry or resistance.

Sivan had stood hitherto on the summit of the steps, concealed from view by the deep shadow, into which the burning cloisters had thrown the entrance of the portico. But the fire which had now caught the interior of the Holy House revealed his figure in broad relief to the assailants; and with a savage shout they rushed upon him. The foremost was a gigantic centurion, covered from head to foot with blood and dust; brandishing a blazing torch in his left hand and a drawn sword in his right. The clang of his armour, as he set foot on the lowest steps of the Sanctuary, seemed to rouse Sivan from the trance of grief and horror into which he had fallen. He retreated hastily through the burning chamber, and lifting the Inner Veil which still shrouded the Holy of Holies from

unhallowed eyes, plunged into its recesses. "The Veil hath been rent," he exclaimed, "and all may now enter here; even if Thou, O God, hadst not departed hence." He drew forth the branch from his vest, and casting himself upon the ground, laid it upon his bosom.

Another instant, and his fierce pursuer dashed after him into the sacred chamber; and perceiving that it contained no aperture whereby light was admitted, raised his torch and fired the Veil. A bright flame sprang up, and disclosed the secret depths, which as yet no profane eye had ever gazed on. Every nook and corner—the ceiling blazing with gold and jewels—the walls enriched with the rarest carvings—the pavement inlaid with costly marbles of a thousand shapes and colours, stood out clearly revealed in the sudden burst of light. But the eye of the centurion vainly sought to discover his intended victim. The chamber was as empty as a ruined sepulchre!

CHAPTER XIV.

His life hath flowed
From its mysterious urn, a sacred stream,
In whose calm depth the beautiful and pure
Alone are mirrored : which, tho' shapes of ill
May hover round its surface, glides in light,
And takes no shadow from them.

TALFOURD.

THERE is no lovelier spot to be found, even in Italy, the garden of the world, than the fair city of Florence. Lying in the midst of smiling vineyards, and extensive pleasure-grounds, which are in their turn environed by mountains clothed with groves of olive, and studded with countless villas, whose white walls contrast gracefully with the colours of earth and sky—she reposes on the banks of the Arno, the undisputed queen of the loveliest of all lands. Beautiful she ever has been, and still is ; but it was towards the close of the fifteenth century that her greatness and prosperity reached their zenith. The wise rule of the dukes of the house of Medici had established her power, and secured her every where respect ; and the princely prodigality of Lorenzo, called the Magnificent, had enriched her with works of art, that have conferred on her, even to this day, a world-wide celebrity.

It was a summer evening, in the period above mentioned—some two or three years, that is, before the close of the fifteenth century—when two youths were seen strolling leisurely along the southern banks of the river, and enjoying the delicious coolness of the hour. They both wore the garb of students; and a citizen of Florence would at once have recognized two of the pupils of Father Justin, prior of the monastery of San Guiseppe, and one of the most famous scholars of the day. It was also easy for any passer-by to discover another fact, from the remarkable similarity of their features and appearance, that they were brothers, and probably twins. The spot in which they were walking commanded a beautiful view of the city, with its endless array of gorgeous palaces, and stately churches; pre-eminent among which towered the dome of the cathedral, whose symmetry and beauty is said to have awakened the admiring envy of Michael Angelo himself. But it was evident that the topic on which they were discoursing was so full of interest to them, that they paid little heed to the beauties of art and nature by which they were surrounded.

"My Leonardo," said one of the brothers, whose name appeared to be Luigi, "I think thou hardly dost Father Girolamo justice, after all. Thou allowest that he is high-minded, able, zealous, incorruptible, and of blameless life; but thou assentest not, or at least assentest not cordially, to the praises which men bestow on his eloquence, his wisdom, and the whole tenor of his life and actions. I have often noted this before, when any with whom we were conversing have freely expressed their admiration of him. I

know thy soul, that it is too pure for envy; yet I would fain learn what thou really thinkest of the prior."

"Thou art right," was the answer; "he is all, and more than thou hast said; yet I never hear him discourse or hold converse with him, that he does not leave me with an impression of uneasiness that I cannot shake off. I cannot but fear that he thinks somewhat too slightly of holy Church, and of those who bear rule in her. Think thou, Luigi, how great and how noble a thing is the Church! Is she not verily and indeed the mustard-plant of the parable? How small the seed from which she sprang! How mighty the tree to which she hath grown! How vast is the shadow of peace that she flings! How many and how various are the nations that build their habitations in her branches! Is it well, can it be well, to speak of her as the father often doth?"

"You wrong him, Leonardo," exclaimed Luigi eagerly. "No man loveth or honoureth the Church more than Father Girolamo. It is those who bear sway in the Church—the priesthood generally, and more especially the monks, the abbots, bishops, cardinals, yea, by our Lady! the Pope himself—these, and these only, does he accuse—these only would he endeavour to amend."

"I know it," answered Leonardo; "but how thinkest thou doth it consist with the reverence and obedience men owe to the Church, that they assail with no measured censures those who exercise lawful authority in her? Is it counted as obedience to a temporal sovereign, for a subject to comment in public, and in the bitterest terms that language can supply, on his

acts, ay, and even declare him unfit to rule, and urge men to disobey him? Would any sovereign suffer such a man to pass unpunished? And is that permissible in holy Church, which is not allowed even in a secular community? Said not St. Paul, following Moses, ‘Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people?’”

“Wouldst thou have wickedness, then, prevail in high places, and no man’s voice bear witness against it? Didst thou not hear but yesterday the tidings that have reached us from Rome, how his Holiness and his son—”

“Nay,” answered Leonardo, hastily interrupting him, “I heard it not; nor will I, with thy good favour, Luigi, hear it now. It may be that it is a calumny; for they are not wanting who will revile those set over the Church of God. And I would fain believe it so, too,” he added, in a lower and scarcely audible tone, “that is, perhaps, after all, the truth. Yes,” he said, in a louder tone, “it may well be a calumny. Thou hast heard Father Girolamo, and those who side with him—how they charge the inmates of the monasteries every where with the same offences, indolence, avarice, worldly pomp, and voluptuous vice, as they do the bishops and cardinals of the Church. Now, thou and I know somewhat of the internal condition of a monastery, and, so far as our knowledge extends, what is said is wholly untrue. Yet if false in one instance, why not in all?”

“I asked that very question of Father Girolamo,” said Luigi, “and he replied, ‘That there were few monasteries like that in which thou and I have been brought up, and fewer teachers like Father Justin.’

But, if I mistake not, yonder is the father himself—a rare thing for him to be met with alone, and engaged in no active work."

As he spoke a man of five-and-forty years of age, or thereabouts, with a massive and intellectual cast of features, a lofty forehead, and a bright, though somewhat restless eye, approached them. This was the celebrated Girolamo di Savonarola, one of the most remarkable characters, not only of the fifteenth century, but of all history; whose motives and actions have drawn forth the most opposite judgments from his various biographers; and respecting whom the world seems still undecided, whether to pronounce him a martyr, a fanatic, or an impostor. But whatever may have been his merits or demerits, he undoubtedly possessed that main element of greatness—the power of imprinting his own ideas on the minds of others, and making them the willing instruments of his purposes. Although he was at this period regarded with jealousy and dislike by the civil rulers of Florence, and with a yet deeper shade of the same feeling by the odious voluptuary who filled the papal chair, there were yet thousands who clung with enthusiastic eagerness to his fortunes; and would willingly have perilled their hopes in this world, and the next, too, as they believed, at his bidding. That Luigi was one of this number might be easily read in his animated face, as the object of his enthusiasm approached.

Savonarola's eyes were bent on the ground in profound meditation, and he was muttering to himself in incoherent sentences—a habit in which men of his peculiar cast of mind are apt to indulge. As he

became sensible of the vicinity of the youths, he looked up.

"Peace be with you, my children," he exclaimed; it is ever welcome to me to meet you. 'Ecce, quam bonum!' how good is it for brethren to dwell together in unity."

"Peace be with thee also, reverend father," answered Luigi; "but surely, if I mistake not, something ails thee," he pursued, as he gazed on the prior's face, which, ever sad in its expression, now wore an unusual shade of melancholy. "Tell me, my father, may not thy son know the cause of thy sorrow?"

"All Florence will soon know it," was the answer. "Ye are aware that more than once I have fallen under the censure of the most holy pontiff, who hath from time to time forbidden me to preach or minister; though he hath been pleased again to withdraw his sentence. But this day there hath arrived a nuncio charged, as I hear, with a fresh commission to take order with the rebellious outcasts in the valleys of Piedmont, who at once repudiate the allegiance they owe to holy Church, and blaspheme her doctrines. But he is also charged with a commission to restore unity, as he phrases it, to the distracted Church at Florence. It is but an hour since he left me. He again offered the full pardon and favour of the holy father; nay, again he proffered the next cardinal's hat that should become vacant, to my acceptance; 'if I would but give peace,' he said, 'to my brethren whom I am leading astray.' But Thou, Lord," added the speaker, looking solemnly upwards, "knowest that I have no thought, save that of peace, in my heart!"

"And what answer made you, my father, if I dare ask?" said Leonardo.

"The same as before," answered Savonarola quickly; "that I would wear no scarlet hat, save one that might be, if God so willed, dyed red with the blood of a martyr."

Luigi's eyes sparkled. "I knew thou wouldest say so," he exclaimed; "and the envoy, what said he, when he found that thy soul was too noble for a bribe?"

"Ay, what indeed, my son?" answered Girolamo sadly; "I had hoped, whatever my sins and shortcomings, to have lived and died within the pale of holy Church; nor at least to be ranked with heretics and infidels! But the messenger of his Holiness, on my refusal of his offers, informed me that he was commanded, in the event of my contumacy, to pronounce against me the sentence of—" he paused in great emotion.

"Of what, father?" exclaimed both the youths at the same moment: "of suspension again; surely not of deprivation—"

"No," answered Savonarola in a calmer voice—"my Luigi, my son, wilt thou stand by me now?—of excommunication!"

At that terrible word, which in those days was held to express a punishment worse than death, Luigi turned deadly pale, and leaned against a tree, which chanced to be close at hand, for support. Leonardo's face, on the contrary, retained its serenity, though it expressed both grief and commiseration.

"Excommunicated!" at length exclaimed Luigi breathlessly; "thou, my father, Girolamo Savonarola,

the prior of San Marco ; thou, the lamp of truth to so many feeble eyes ; the staff to support so many tottering steps — thou excommunicated — reckoned with the heretics, the apostates, the worse than heathen ! Surely, my father, thou dreamest ; it cannot be.”

“Calm thyself, my son ; mistake there can be none. I myself heard, and to-morrow all Florence will hear, the sentence of the holy father.”

“He is not holy,” exclaimed Luigi passionately ; “holy men do not hate, persecute, denounce those holier than themselves ! Call him rather—”

“Hush, my brother,” said Leonardo advancing ; “thou rememberest not of whom thou speakest. Reverend father,” he continued, turning with deep respect to Savonarola, “I am but a child in knowledge and wisdom when compared to thee ; yet thou knowest the text that by the mouth of such, God sometimes ordaineth strength. Dost thou not thyself teach that it befits all dutiful children of the Church to obey her commands : and, again, that the Church speaketh by the mouth of the sovereign pontiff ? How, then, can it be that thou deemest it lawful, nay, as I infer from thy actions, right for thee to censure the words, and hold up to infamy and scorn the character of him whom thou accountest the vicar of God on earth ?”

“And thinkest thou, young man,” replied Savonarola calmly, “that I have never considered that question ; yea, considered it solemnly and painfully, with prayer and fasting ? Dost thou not know that in the darkest times God never leaveth Himself without a witness on earth ? Though the strong wind of man’s

fury may roar, and the earthquake of his passions may swallow up the guiltless, and the fire of his persecution may devour the faithful, yet will the still, small voice be heard in which Himself speaketh. Was not David the crowned king of Israel, yet did Nathan openly rebuke his sin, and declare the wrath of God against him? Was not Eli the anointed high priest of God, yet by the mouth of his servant Samuel was ruin and judgment foretold?"

"True," said Leonardo; "but Samuel and Nathan had received their commission direct from the lips of divine wisdom itself, which justified what else would have been irreverence and rebellion."

"And am not I too a servant of God?" retorted Savonarola. "Am not I too a chosen vessel of His pleasure? Have not I also received a commission, as they did, to denounce oppression and lawless violence in those who sit in the seat of power—to declare God's judgment on the murderer and the adulterer, though he be clothed in the purple of the monarch, or wear the mitre and robe of the high priest? If God could thus openly declare his will and pleasure by the mouth of the Jew—ere the veil was rent, and near approach to the throne was permitted—shall He not do so now, when clearer light hath been poured on the eyes of men, and their transgressions are therefore the darker and blacker in his sight? Are these days, think you, when the voice of prophecy could be suffered to remain silent?"

"Mean you, then," exclaimed Leonardo hastily, "that over and above the commission every priest receives to teach and minister, to absolve and consecrate, thou hast been endowed with special powers

from on high, which set thee apart from men, and above law, even as Elijah was of old?"

"Even so," said Savonarola, "and woe to me, if I do not the work appointed me, or do it negligently! But, I fear not; for it hath been revealed unto me that I shall continue faithful to the last, blessed be God my Helper! Yea, my children, I have seen in the Spirit, the death that shall befall me! Would ye learn," he continued, turning his piercing glance on the youths, who trembled with involuntary emotion at the stern solemnity of his speech; "would ye know the end that awaits Girolamo di Savonarola? Know then, that I have seen a cross raised high above a shouting multitude; and one hanging thereon, between two others; and beheld the death-sweat stream in torrents from his brow; and his features wrung with the final agony; and I trembled not, though those features were mine own!"

Leonardo and Luigi listened with wonder, largely mingled with awe, to this strange declaration. So imposing was the presence of the speaker, so solemn the deep tones of his voice, so calm and collected his whole demeanour, that despite of the marvellous nature of the claim he advanced, and the unlikelihood of such a termination to the career of one so generally popular and beloved in Florence as Savonarola, it seemed impossible to believe him to be either a deceiver or a dupe. A profound silence ensued, which was at last broken by the sound of a bell which came across the waters of the Arno, from the lofty cupola of the cathedral. A moment afterwards the same sound was echoed by countless churches and convents, announcing what the fast deepening shadows of night might al-

ready have apprised them of; that the hour of compline was at hand. The youths were about to bid their companion good night; when the prior, turning to Luigi, asked him to accompany him home, and aid him for an hour or two in writing the petition he was preparing for the consideration of his Holiness. Luigi at once assented, and taking leave of his brother, who returned leisurely to his convent, moved off with Father Girolamo.

Leonardo, or,—as the reader has, in all likelihood, already conjectured—Sivan,—was deeply moved by what he had heard. He had been for several years a student, in company with his brother Luigi, in the monastery of San Guiseppe, under the charge of Father Justin, a monk of the Dominican order. The father of the twins, Francesco di Sivori, had been, in early life, a near friend of Justin di Serrano, then a humble friar in the monastery of Mount St. Agnes. Shortly after his wife's death, Francesco, finding his own health decline, had entrusted his twin-sons to the charge of Father Justin, and a few months afterwards had expired.

Their new guardian, a wise and upright man, had fulfilled his promise most judiciously, as well as conscientiously. He took the lads into his own convent, and himself superintended their education. The natural feeling of compassion for the forlorn condition of the orphans, had gradually ripened into an affection like that of a father, and was requited by an equally warm attachment on the part of the youths. When, a few years since, Sivan had found himself, in the same mysterious manner as heretofore, animating the frame, and occupying the place of

Leonardo di Sivori, he soon acquired as deep, or even a deeper affection for his venerable protector, than had been felt by his prototype. Under his able tuition, which the wealthiest nobles of Florence would gladly have purchased at a costly price for their sons, he had studied theology and history, with a zeal and intensity of application that had already extended his fame beyond the bounds of Florence.

Deeply absorbed in these pursuits, Sivan rarely mixed in any society, save that of the few simple-hearted monks who constituted the brethren of the monastery; rarely, indeed, extended his walks beyond the limits of the prior's garden. Father Justin, who had now attained to the dignity of prior, had judged it inexpedient to enlighten him as to the real condition of many things in the Church; which he himself, the favourite pupil of Thomas à Kempis, and resembling that saintly man in purity of heart, and integrity of purpose, deplored and deprecated. Even in the authors selected for Sivan's studies, he had been careful to exclude any which might cast any doubt on the paramount authority of the rulers of the Church, or call in question the holiness and wisdom of its priesthood. He had argued that knowledge of evil would come only too soon, and that it would be wisest and safest to fortify the mind to bear the shock firmly when that time should arrive. Ignorant, as of course he was, of the real inward history of his strange pupil, he had never dreamed that the result of the system he was pursuing, would be to encourage not only a deep-set belief in the perfectibility of mankind, but even of its near approach to that condition.

Yet so it was. Sivan accepted, with implicit faith,

the statements of the writers he studied, respecting the divine wisdom discernible no less in the outward development of the Church's authority, than in the gradual growth of its defined dogmas. He dwelt with affectionate interest on the self-devotion of the early centuries ; of the martyrs and confessors, who watered the first seed-plots of the Gospel with their blood, and who were the genuine successors of those whom he had himself known in his last brief existence. He perused with unquestioning faith the records of the miracles wrought by their hands—which again but echoed the voice of his own experience—and accepted the assurance which the same pages contained, that the miraculous powers bestowed on the infant Church had never left her in her riper years. He traced with admiration the silent growth of the Church in all lands, until it had reached its present colossal stature ; and coeval with it the development of its form of government; whereby the machinery which the first inspired planters of Christianity had devised for the regulation of a single Church had been expanded, until it embraced the faithful of all nations—a visible kingdom with, as it seemed to him, by necessary consequence, a visible Head. Whatever impediments might have beset her earlier career, or have caused doubt in any minds as to the legitimacy of her claim of universal authority over Christendom ; now, at least, he argued, they had all been removed. Who could dispute it with her ? Even the Greek communion, which had so long denied her title, had, in the last generation, conceded the points at issue, and been reconciled to her. And though some of her members had rebelled against this act, yet they had

been punished, as he believed, by the overthrow of their nation, and the bondage of their Church to the Turk. At all events, in her present state, she could offer no antagonism to her old rival. No! Every where Rome stood triumphant and alone. From without, no enemy appeared to threaten her; and within—the first throes of the Reformation had not yet begun to be felt. Even those who sat at the helm had no suspicion of the coming storm; nor guessed that the present universal unity of Christendom, was but the smoothness of the river, the very moment before it leaps over the brow of the precipice, and is broken into countless streams, boiling and struggling in inextricable confusion. As regarded his own times more particularly, Sivan paid comparatively but little heed to them, living, as he did, almost wholly in the past. When his attention was turned to them, he thought of all dignitaries as resembling Father Justin; while he identified in his mind the general mass with the brethren of the monastery, whom the reputation or personal influence of the prior had assembled within its walls; and who passed their lives in a round of pious and charitable duties.

If these sentiments should seem strange to any of my readers, they should bear in mind how potent is the influence of contemporary opinion and established forms of belief. Even those who in after-life were most remarkable for the determined stand they made against the unfounded pretensions advanced by the Church of Rome—Wycliffe and Huss, Luther and Melancthon—were equally remarkable, in their early years, for the depth of their devotion to her cause, and their unbounded faith in her supremacy. It is chiefly through

the disappointment, that high-souled natures experience in discovering how ill-founded is the implicit faith they have placed on all around them that claims to be good, that a truer conviction of what is needful for the welfare of mankind arises in their bosoms ; and they who have never trusted and been deceived, will hardly originate a wholesome reformation.

Nearly three years had passed when the return of Luigi, the twin-brother of Leonardo, who had been absent on a series of lengthened visits to some relatives of their mother, furnished him not only with a companion, but also with a new influx of ideas. Luigi had always been fond of his brother, and Sivan's affectionate heart soon responded to his attachment. But Luigi, though of a temper even more enthusiastic than Sivan, had yet seen too much of the society of that day, to share his brother's happier belief. Collisions of opinion would sometimes ensue which irritated the one brother, and unsettled the other. Particularly had this been the case during the last twelvemonth ; in the course of which Luigi had become attached to Girolamo di Savonarola, who was now attaining to the climax of his favour with the people of Florence. The uncompromising exposure and bitter denunciations of the vices of the hierarchy, in which he indulged, were frequently repeated to Sivan, and always caused him perplexity and uneasiness. He had, in fact, only quieted himself by adopting the belief that the prior of San Marco was either a visionary, who saw every thing through a distorted medium ; or an impostor who, for his own purposes, wilfully misrepresented them. Of late he had been persuaded by Luigi's entreaties to attend occasionally at Father Girolamo's discourses,

delivered in the Duomo of Florence ; and the result had been an unwelcome conviction that there was little visible in the father's demeanour or sentiments to justify such an opinion of him. The present occasion, however, had been the first on which he had encountered Savonarola in private : and as he slowly retraced his steps along the banks of the Arno, he could not but acknowledge to himself that the stamp of sincerity was strongly imprinted on his words and sentiments ; a circumstance that forced conclusions upon him which he was most reluctant to entertain ; and he entered the great gateway of the convent full of doubt and anxiety.

But the spectacle of the rich light, streaming from the windows of the chapel, now lit up for compline—as the final service of the day was termed—recalled him to the business of the hour ; and he rejoiced to think that here at least was a haven where no disappointment could enter. The chapel was indeed a gem of art, the masterpiece of the immortal Bruneleschi, and adorned with splendid gifts by the munificent Lorenzo. The lofty roof, inlaid with gorgeous, though subdued colouring, rose from richly-wrought pilasters, between each of which was inserted a mullioned window, filled with stained glass, representing the saints of the early Italian Church. The east end was adorned with a noble painting by Giotto, which had been so arranged as to blend harmoniously with the carvings round the altar. Niches filled with silver statues adorned the wall from pavement to roof ; and in the central compartment stood a large crucifix, wrought with the rarest skill, and overlaid with gold and jewels. Large bouquets of flowers, gathered from the convent

gardens, were grouped with the carvings of the stalls and finials, diffusing rich perfumes through the building: and from the roof were suspended several gilded chandeliers, of exquisite design, which sent a blaze of light into the farthest corners. But it was not so much the splendour of the edifice that over-powered Sivan, open as he was to sensations arising from outward beauty, as the faith in God's near presence, which seemed to be stamped on every line and feature—in full conviction of which man had laboured, so far as was in his power, to make the chapel a house for the Lord, a fitting habitation for the mighty God of Jacob! The like feeling appeared to be impressed on the worship offered within its walls. Hymn and chant, litany and anthem, rose in succession to the gorgeous roof, each borne aloft by a hundred voices trained to unite and harmonize with each other. Sivan felt his disquietude vanish away like a morning mist, and deep peace sank down upon his soul.

CHAPTER XV.

This night let every thought be given to thee.
Beautiful scenes, farewell—farewell, my home !
And thou grey convent, whose inspiring chime
Measures the hours with prayer, that morn and eve
Life may ascend the ladder of the angels,
And climb to heaven ! serene retreats, farewell.

BULWER.

"THE reverend prior would speak with you in his own apartment," said the porter of the convent, as Sivan quitted the chapel.

"Immediately, good Giacomo ?" inquired he.

"Immediately," was the reply. "An hour before compline a visitor arrived with his train, the nuncio, I am told, of his Holiness, and chief of the Inquisition at Turin. He hath been closeted with the prior ever since. His business, I hear," continued the garrulous old man, "is of urgent importance. Some say the prior of San Marco is to be tried for heresy, and his reverence is to be chief judge of the court; others that he is to be made cardinal, and Father Justin removed to the convent of San Marco, which is more richly endowed than this. But whatever the matter in hand may be, I judge it is one of no small consequence, or the prior would not have been absent from the chapel service, which hath not happened a dozen times since I have been porter here. I was to

have sent thee to him the moment thou didst return to the convent; but in sooth I discerned thee not among the crowd as you entered the chapel." Running on in this manner, Giacomo led the way to the prior's study; at which he tapped for admission, and then throwing open the door, admitted Sivan to his superior's presence.

Father Justin and his visitor were seated each in a massive oaken chair near a table of equally solid construction, the ordinary garniture of the houses of the wealthier classes in those times. On a small stand near the prior's elbow lay the skull, crucifix, and rosary, which he had used when a humble monk in the convent of Mount St. Agnes, and were a legacy from his friend and instructor Thomas à Kempis, whose deathbed he had attended. The table before him was strewn with manuscripts in various languages, indicating an amount of learning on the part of their possessor, not usual even among the more highly educated of that age and country; and written on parchments, from which perhaps some lost treatise of Cicero or Pliny had been erased, in order to make room for a homily of Origen, or Ephrem the Syrian.

It would be hard to imagine two persons of the same age, country, and profession, who were less like each other than the prior of San Guiseppe and his guest. The former was a fine-looking old man, with a high and massive forehead, and the few scattered locks of silver which make old age appear so noble. His clear grey eye indicated deep thought and penetration, but mingled with an expression of benevolence which dispelled the awe that his presence would else have inspired. Father Ludovico's physiognomy was

also very striking. His forehead was equally high, but narrow and receding; his dark eye seemed to pierce the inmost bosom of those on whom it lighted, and his features were massive and regular; but the stern, self-concentrated purpose that was discernible, as it were, beneath the surface of his unruffled composure and dignified courtesy, not only warned those with whom he conversed of the hopelessness of deception; but also involuntarily awoke a feeling of uneasiness and distrust.

"Welcome, my son," said Father Justin, as Sivan entered. "Reverend brother," he continued, turning to his visitor, "this is my pupil, Leonardo di Sivori, whose presence thou hast desired. For his learning, ability, and good faith I am his willing guarantee; for his fitness to discharge the office thou dost propose, thou must thyself be the judge. I tell thee again I cannot answer for it."

Ludovico saluted Sivan with a courteous smile. "Thou dost us less than justice," he said, "to doubt that we can duly appreciate the high qualities and merits of thine adopted son, or deem that we should commit so great an error as to suggest any employment which would be unworthy of them. He, I feel assured, accounts, even as thou and I do, that the cause and work of the Church are the noblest on which the faculties of man can be engaged."

"Surely," replied the prior; "but the Church imposes various duties on her children, which all are not alike qualified to discharge. Yet I will state to him the service for which thou dost demand him of me, and thou shalt hear from his own lips how far he deems himself suited to perform it successfully."

"Leonardo," he pursued, "thou hast doubtless

heard of the unhappy heresy of the Valdesi¹, as they are called, who inhabit the mountain-valleys of Piedmont, which for many an age hath grieved and harassed the Church of God. His Holiness, as vicegerent of Christ on earth, cannot allow this rent in the Lord's seamless coat, this ulcer in the body of the Church, to continue unhealed. There are those among his counsellors, who hold that nought but the surgeon's knife will avail to the cure of the disease. But he, loving mercy rather than judgment, would fain essay milder remedies. To this end he hath ordered, in accordance with the advice of the Archbishop of Turin, that disputationes should be held with such of the Valdesi—their teachers, that is, or barbs, as they term them—as shall fall into our hands; that so being instructed in the true doctrines of the Church they may return in safety to their homes, and impart the knowledge they have acquired to their countrymen. Such, at least, I understand to be the Archbishop's purpose."

"It is," interposed the nuncio. "The holy father would rather conquer by mild and persuasive argument, than by the employment of sterner, though salutary discipline. But it is needful for the carrying out of his gracious design that able and learned disputants should be selected to uphold the Church's cause. Rude as these mountaineers may seem, their knowledge of Scripture and of the writings of the earlier fathers is considerable. It has been in consequence, doubtless, of too low an estimate having been formed of them in this particular, that in the controversies hitherto held, the champions of the Church have not maintained the ascendancy which belongs rightfully to her; and hence great scandal and injury

¹ More generally known to the English reader as Waldenses.

hath been occasioned to the cause of truth. Such an error must be guarded against for the future; and there is twofold need of a careful selection, as I hear that since my departure from Turin, one of the most learned teachers of the Valdesi, Conrad Biorno by name, has been taken prisoner, and men are looking with eagerness to hear him dispute in public. It is even whispered that we dare not allow him to appear; since none can be found of sufficient learning and eloquence to cope successfully with him. It is for this reason, chiefly, that I am anxious to secure the advocacy of the favourite pupil of the prior of San Guiseppe, whose very name forbids the supposition of defeat."

"Reverend father," said Sivan, "if it be possible let this task be deputed to another. It would ill suit one who hath not yet attained middle life, and hath never quitted the shadow of his cloister, to undertake a duty that requires not book learning alone, but experience of life and knowledge of mankind. Besides—"

"Thy modesty becomes thee well," said Ludovico, without the slightest apparent shade of annoyance, "but thy superior, who is a better judge of thy merits than thy self-distrust permits thee to be, affirms thee to be learned as Timothy in the Scriptures, and deeply conversant with the writings of primitive antiquity. Nor dost thou lack powers of argument, or readiness of speech." He looked at the prior as he spoke.

"I may not deny it," said Father Justin, in answer to this mute appeal, and glancing at Sivan with a look of affectionate pride. "Bless God, my son, and not thine own fancied wisdom, I have no fear that thou wouldest shame thy teacher."

"It is not altogether on that account," said Sivan; "my fear is rather that should I be found wanting, not only will my feeble advocacy injure the cause I am singled out to serve, but will subject some unhappy brother to suffering and death; who might, perhaps, have escaped both, had an abler antagonist been found him."

"Nay," interposed the prior, "but thou hast heard that there is no talk of bonds or death in this matter. Shouldst thou prevail in argument over this adversary, whom men magnify so much, then rejoice, for thou hast gained thy brother; should the result be otherwise, which St. Dominic forbid! he will, if I apprehend rightly, be permitted to depart in safety for that time at least. Is it not so, my reverend brother?"

"Fear not, my brother," answered the nuncio, with ready frankness; "the purpose of the Church is nought but mercy towards these unhappy sinners against their own souls, whom she seeks to reclaim. Nay, do not urge aught against such a purpose," he added quickly, seeing Sivan was about to speak, and instantly putting his own interpretation on the remark he was preparing to offer, "it may seem to thee unwise, or even unfaithful, to show such mercy to heretics; but it is not thine to judge, but to obey what the Church decrees. Nor wilt thou, I think, young man"—he fixed his keen eye upon him, and his voice took a slight intonation of severity—"urge farther objection to a proposal which will best employ the talents that have been given thee; for that were to do little honour to thy master's teaching."

Sivan was silent. The hint that his farther persistence would bring discredit on his beloved teacher and friend, was sufficient to overcome even stronger reluctance than he felt. Moreover, he was naturally of an unsuspecting temper; and had it been otherwise, he had nothing but vague misgiving to allege in reply to Father Ludovico's assurances. The latter saw that he had gained his point, and at once resumed the easy graciousness of his demeanour.

"I will leave thee to bid farewell to thy superior," he said, rising as he spoke, "for the time presses. Preparation must be made for thy fitting attendance and accommodation; and to-morrow's dawn must see us on the route to Livorno, where we take shipping for Genoa, and so by horse to Turin. I will give the necessary orders as soon as I return to my lodging, and will place thee under the especial care of Ulric von Happenburgh, the captain of my escort; he shall come to bring thee to my hostelry an hour before midnight. Ho! without there! see that my servitors are in readiness!"

"And Luigi, my brother?" exclaimed Sivan, startled at the rapidity of the father's movements.

"Luigi di Sivori," said the other, with a slight, though momentary frown, "he is thy brother, ha? He shall be admitted," he added, after a moment's thought, "within the gates of the courtyard an hour ere the cavalcade sets forth, and I will take care that he is duly warned. And now, my brother, good night; and our Lady's benison be with thee!"

"My father," said Sivan, as the door closed behind Ludovico, "are we, indeed, to part so soon, and so

suddenly? And can it be thy wish that I should go upon this mission for which I feel so unfitted?"

"I cannot gainsay it, my son; nay, I could not prevent it, if I would. I have long been aware that thou wouldest not be suffered to continue in this peaceful retreat, but I have lacked the heart to tell thee so. Yet comfort thyself; thine errand is one of peace; and soon shall I hope to receive thee back with rejoicing and honour. Enough of this; we have but an hour to pass together. Let us talk of the things which concern us most nearly."

"You remind me," said Sivan, "of a subject respecting which I have long desired to converse with thee; and I could not leave Florence with any comfort ere I had done so. It concerns Father Girolamo di Savonarola, the prior of St. Marco. I have frequently of late heard him discourse both in public and in private, and his words cause me pain and disquietude."

Father Justin's face took a yet deeper shade of sadness, but he only bowed his head, and motioned the speaker to proceed.

"Father Girolamo," pursued Sivan, "scruples not to charge the pastors of Christ's flock as a body, and those who bear rule in that body more especially, with many dark and shameless vices. He complains, as I myself heard him say in the church of San Lorenzo, that the chastity of the cloister is slain; that the clergy are undisguisedly profligate and worldly; and that those highest in place are lowest in holiness of life. I feel that it were sin to attach any faith to declarations like these; nay, that some of

them, my own experience, small as that is, will disprove; and yet, father, yet—”

“Go on, my son,” said Justin, with an averted face, “go on; I would hear thee to the end.”

“And yet,” resumed Sivan, “there is that about Father Girolamo that I cannot hold him to be either a visionary or a pretender. His mode of life is as austere as that of any anchorite of the earlier ages. His couch is a rough plank, his food the coarsest bread, and the water of the spring; and these only in scanty quantity. His dress is of the plainest materials, his lodging a cell, more comfortless than that of the humblest brother of his convent. Is not this so, my father?”

“Yea,” said the prior, “I may not deny it. All that thou hast said is true.”

“But there are other things—things of deeper import—that tend to prove him to be no deceiver, but rather a true prophet sent from God. Luigi told me that he once journeyed with him in a boat down the Arno, that was conveying some soldiers and military stores to one of the duke’s castles. Father Girolamo sat still awhile, hearkening in silence to the ribaldry and blasphemy, which they mingled with their talk. At length starting up, he craved leave to discourse to them awhile of things that would interest them; and he had scarce spoken for ten minutes to them, when they flung themselves at his feet, and prayed him to ask the forgiveness of God for the sins they had committed.”

“I can well believe it,” said Father Justin; “I have had proof of things done by him that much resemble what thou hast told me.”

"But, above all," continued Sivan, "what a day was that in the history of Florence, when the whole concourse of citizens were so deeply stirred by the holy father's preaching against vanity, that they brought together the fond and foolish toys wherewith they bedeck themselves on holidays, and all their books of a licentious and unholy nature, and publicly burnt them in the market-place. There hath no such sight been witnessed in Christendom since the days of the holy Apostles, when 'many that used curious arts burned their books before all men, and counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.' Surely, my father, these are veritable signs that the prior of San Marco hath, indeed, the Spirit of God working in him."

"It were no more than reason to think so," replied the old man.

"Thou seest, then, my difficulty," said Sivan. "I know not how to believe Father Girolamo; yet even less do I know how to disbelieve him."

Father Justin gave a deep sigh. "Thou hast touched the very core of the matter," he said. "It may be that I have erred in keeping thee too long by the side of these peaceful waters, and erred yet more in not teaching thee that the shore that lay beyond them was dark, stormy, and ungenial. I fear that Father Girolamo hath but too much truth in what he alleges, as regards the lives of many, who should be patterns to Christ's flock; though in the plenitude of his zeal and indignation he attributeth that to the whole body, which of right belongeth but to a part. Too many instances wilt thou find when thou mixest in the world, that will seem to ratify and

confirm his words ; yet remember, my son, that man seeth more readily the evil of his neighbour's heart than the good ; and every where, though the surface be troubled, there are deep and quiet waters beneath."

Sivan's face grew even sadder than that of his reverend superior as he heard these words ; for, in the keenness of the disappointment which the commencement of Father Justin's speech had caused him, the closing sentences fell but vaguely on his ear.

" And is it so, indeed, my father," he exclaimed ; " and is the state of Christendom such as Father Girolamo describes, in this present day, fifteen hundred years after the delivery of the Gospel message ? Hath the leaven been working for so many centuries, and yet the lump not only still needeth to be leavened, but the leaven itself seemeth to have lost its virtue ? "

" My Leonardo," said the prior, " the workings of God are ever slow as they are sure : slow, that is, as man accounts it ; but not slow, it may be, in His eyes, who is the Author and Lord of all time. Knowest thou not that that which springeth up in an hour, dieth in an hour ; but that which is to last for ages, requireth ages to bring it to ripeness. The love and knowledge of God, as revealed in Christ, is a thing that is destined to endure, not through time only, but eternity. Should man, then, be impatient if its development seems to him long deferred ? Hast thou forgotten that four thousand years elapsed after the creation of the world, ere the Sun of righteousness rose upon it ? Canst thou wonder that a day, whose morning was so long in breaking, hath not yet attained to the fulness of its noontide glory ? "

Sivan mused awhile. "There is wisdom in thy words," he said. "And even so did impatient spirits, in the time of the holy Apostles, expect the immediate approach of the judgment-day, because its speedy arrival had been predicted by the Prophets of God; and their impatience was rebuked by St. Peter and St. Paul, for forgetting that what man deemeth a long delay, is to God but as a moment of time. Yet surely, should not man have made some progress towards the true holiness which the Gospel requires, in fifteen centuries? I grant that a great tree, such as the Scripture likens the Gospel to, is long in attaining the maturity of its growth; yet a tree will put forth its fruits even in its earlier years, though not perchance in the full perfection of their flavour."

"Dost thou mean, then," said Father Justin, "that the Church of Christ hath put forth neither blossom nor fruit? Even were that so, there would remain the promise that cannot fail, of her ultimate acceptance, faultless before God. But surely the study of so many years will not lead thee to such a conclusion. Leonardo, my son," he pursued more gently, "I implore it of thee, as perhaps the last request I shall make, that thou retain thy faith in the better nature of thy fellow-men, and of the future, though it may be distant, growth of the Church to perfection. Retain it through every doubt and trial that may assail thee in the new scenes wherein thou art about to mingle; for trust me it is one of the truest, even as it is one of the rarest, of the gifts of Heaven."

At this moment a horn, winded at the outer gate, startled them; and a servant entered, announcing that the officer, despatched by his reverence the nuncio,

had arrived to conduct brother Leonardo to his lodgings.

"So soon!" exclaimed the prior. "Surely the time cannot yet have elapsed: and yet it is so," he pursued, turning to the huge wooden clock, with its massive weights and cumbrous wheels, that was fixed against the wall of the chamber. "How rapidly speed the hours when we would fain delay their flight! We must part, then, my son; yet not until I have heard thy confession, and thou hast received my absolution and blessing. It may be that I shall never hearken to the one, nor bestow the other upon thee again. Let us, then, so acquit ourselves to each other, that, should we never meet again on earth, our last duty may have been faithfully performed."

Sivan sank on his knee before him, and proceeded to lay bare the secrets of his soul: but what followed need not and should not be dwelt upon. The system of enforced and periodical confession, as practised then and now in the Church of Rome, had never been brought before Sivan in a light which could offend the sensibilities of his inward life, or give any hint of the dangers which arise from it. He had been wont to go to the good father when his soul felt the need of the counsel and comfort of one in whom he could confide, and with whom he could entirely sympathize; and the blessings he had thence derived were treasured among his most precious remembrances. In his mind it was identified with the practice of those early times—the period of his residence at Pella—when Christians would mutually confess their faults one to another, and pray that the wounds of their souls might be healed; when,

they would, more especially, seek the most pure and holy of life for that purpose ; that so they might obtain the benefit of their prayers, knowing that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man would avail them much. Nor did he doubt that the same blessings, which he had received through the intercession of the righteous in those primitive times, were also granted to him, through the intercession of Father Justin, in his present existence.

The rite concluded, Sivan rose, strengthened and comforted, and, taking a hurried farewell of the prior, accompanied the servitor to the apartment where the officer was awaiting him. The former rose as he entered, and greeted him with a respect, which showed that Father Ludovico had desired he should be treated with no ordinary deference. Sivan could not help looking with some surprise at his appearance ; which, indeed, was remarkable enough to have attracted the notice of the most unobservant. His complexion and light-coloured moustache, no less than his name and the accent with which he spoke, showed him to be a German. His features, naturally harsh, were scarce improved, in respect of comeliness, by the loss of an eye, from the wound, as it seemed, of a spear or arrow —a souvenir, doubtless, of some hard-fought field. His stature was rather below the middle size; but his great breadth of shoulder, and huge brawny limbs, argued immense strength and powers of endurance. He was splendidly attired in the dress of an officer of the Pope's guard: but no richness of apparel could impart grace to a figure so heavy and ill-proportioned ; nor any affectation of high breeding polish a

demeanour of such invincible awkwardness. He saluted Sivan, however, with all the courtesy he could command.

"Reverend signor," he said, "I have the orders of my most gracious and reverend lord to escort you, at your leisure, to the lodging that hath been made ready for you, and see that in all respects fitting attendance is provided. Two of my troop have been already appointed by me to wait more particularly on your pleasure; and a gallant palfrey is set apart for your use, which, I doubt not, considering your years, you will prefer to the ambling pace of the mules, which convey the more elderly of the brethren. If there be aught else wherein I can serve you, it will be my happiness to do so."

"I thank you, gallant sir," replied Sivan with equal urbanity; "and as the night wears, and I have business to discharge ere our departure to-morrow, I will, under your favour, at once accompany you. Might I inquire," he pursued, as they quitted the convent, "what may be the hour at which we are to set out to-morrow?"

"An hour after sunrise," replied Von Happenburgh; "let me add, if your inquiry be connected with your brother, that he has already been apprised that you are on the eve of quitting Florence, and that in the morning, at five of the clock, he will be admitted to your presence to bid you farewell." Sivan again expressed his thanks for the information, and shortly afterwards they reached the mansion where the nuncio's train was quartered.

It will readily be imagined that the night which ensued brought but little repose to the reluctant traveller.

In the morning, wearied and depressed, he stepped out into the courtyard where Luigi was already awaiting him. It was a mournful interview to both. Over and above the bitterness of parting from each other, each had his own special cause for sadness. Sivan retained a painful impression of the conversation he had held with Father Justin, and was also haunted by an uneasy feeling that he was about to mix in scenes which would prove distasteful to his feelings, if not repugnant to his sense of right. Luigi, on the other hand, was keenly alive to the dishonour with which his beloved Father Girolamo had been treated, and to the great peril which he could not disguise from himself, might be impending over his head. They could do little but mingle their tears, and promise to pray for each other's welfare.

"As soon as I am quit of this painful duty, my Luigi," said Sivan, "my first thought will be of thee and Father Justin. Thou must live in hope that I shall prevail in argument over this Conrad Biorno, the heretic whom I told thee of, and then my return may haply soon follow."

"And thou must hope, Leonardo," said Luigi, "that Father Girolamo may speedily triumph over his enemies, and then I shall be at liberty to seek thee. I cannot leave my more than father while this trouble is on him, but that once past, I will not fail to follow thee. But see, thou art summoned. Farewell, once more, my brother." They again embraced, and then Sivan mounting the steed which one of the men-at-arms was holding, rode forth in the rear of the cavalcade.

"May I pray you, fair sir," said Ulric, as reining his war-horse by the side of Sivan's palfrey, he passed

the gates of Florence, “whether you can inform me how the heretic is called, with whom the disputation is to be held, on your arrival at Turin? Unless mine ears deceived me, methought I caught, just now, the name of an old acquaintance.”

“Father Ludovico mentioned it to me yesterday,” replied Sivan; “it is, if I mistake not, Biorno.”

An expression of hatred and anger darkened Ulric’s face. “I was not mistaken, then!” he muttered, “and his Christian name—was it not Arnold?”

“No,” said Sivan, “I recollect distinctly that it was not. It was Conrad, not Arnold.”

“Ha! No matter, if it is not the slave himself, it is his father. He or his—it is all one! Let us see if the debt that has so long been due, shall not now be cancelled!”

CHAPTER XVI.

And she that ever through her home had moved,
With the meek thoughtfulness and quiet smile
Of woman, calmly loving and beloved,
And timid in her happiness the while,
Stood brightly forth, and stedfastly, that hour,
Her clear glance kindling into sudden power.

HEMANS.

A LARGE concourse was gathered in the open space before the convent of San Giovanni, the principal Dominican establishment at Turin. It consisted partly of the trains of various dignitaries of Church and State, partly of monks and townspeople. So high had been Father Justin's commendations of his pupil's learning and powers of argument, that the Archbishop of Turin had invited all the chief nobility of the surrounding country, together with the civil and ecclesiastical functionaries in Turin, to attend the disputation held that day between Leonardo di Sivori, on the side of the Church, and Conrad Biorno, one of the most reputed among the barbs of the Valdesi; in full confidence that the side to which he belonged, would gain a decisive victory. The disputation itself had been delayed several months later than was originally intended, partly owing to the absence of the archbishop, partly to the severe illness of Biorno, from

which he had only lately recovered. This circumstance, together with the high estimation in which both the champions were held by their respective parties, had attracted an unusual amount of attention. On the day appointed, therefore, nearly all who had been invited by the archbishop, attended the summons ; and the great hall of the convent was thronged not only with ecclesiastics, but with knights and nobles, and even ladies of high rank, so as to render it difficult to find accommodation for all. The interest felt in the controversy may surprise us of the present day ; to whom such an occasion would probably hold out but little inducement to attend. But the surprise will vanish when we remember, that in those days, theology was not only a topic of religious, but political importance ; and men had, comparatively speaking, but few opportunities of hearing it powerfully handled. It excited no man's wonder, therefore, to behold the gallant muster of retainers, richly dressed and armed to the teeth, for those were days when men rarely laid their armour aside, which was assembled near the great gate of the convent. It was a gay and imposing spectacle. Banners of every device waved over-head ; armour glittered and rang ; rich scarfs and surcoats relieved and blended gaily with one another ; pages in every variety of fancy costume were continually passing in and out of the building. A little farther off the more sober garb of the monks and townsfolk formed a dark frame to this brilliant picture. A closer examination also of the several elements that made up the motley assemblage conveyed a strange impression to the spectator. Men-at-arms of all ages and countries were found mingled curiously together.

Cavaliers of fortune, the last scattered remains perhaps of some ancient band of condottieri, from Germany, and France, and Spain, and even the distant British Isles, stood side by side, or rode in the same troop with the soldiers of Switzerland and Italy. Each might, in general, be easily distinguished from the natives of other countries, by their costume, language, and demeanour ; having, in fact, little in common but the reckless indifference to any law but that of military service, which every where characterizes the mercenary soldier.

One group in particular attracted general attention from the splendour of its appearance. It consisted of a short thickset man of Herculean strength, who was leaning against a war-horse of equally strong proportions—no other than Ulric von Happenburgh, the officer under whose escort Sivan had journeyed from Florence. Another soldier of about the same age, whose light and easy bearing bespoke the Frenchman, lounged against the pillars of the portico; and clustered in various attitudes near him, were several younger men wearing the same dress, whose darker complexions indicated a more southern origin. The whole aspect of the party, as well as the exclamations which occasionally broke from them, argued them to be heartily weary of their situation ; and the appearance of one of their comrades, who had just emerged from the gate of the convent, called forth a host of inquiries.

“ Well, Bartolo,” said the central figure of the group, “ is not this business nearly over, or is it to last till sunset ? ”

“ Nearly over ! ” exclaimed Bartolo, in reply, “ it is scarce yet begun ; at least if one may infer any thing

from the eagerness which both parties exhibit. They are both as fresh as the stag-hounds of our friend La Croix here,"—he glanced at the Frenchman as he spoke,—“when the deer hath just been started; and what is stranger, the hearers seem almost as eager as the disputants themselves.”

“Every one to his taste,” said La Croix; “such a mode of passing the hours of a fine November day is somewhat of a strange one.”

There was a laugh among the younger men. “Dost thou call it a waste of time, thou old sinner,” said one, “to hear learned doctors expound the faith of the Church, and convict the errors of heretics?”

“Ay, Master Angelo,” replied the Frenchman, “I do; I call it an utter waste of time: for every one knoweth what the result will be, ere a word hath been said by either party.”

“True,” said a monk of the convent, who was standing near; “thou art right, my brother. The faithful sons of holy Church are always sure to be victorious, whensoever they come into contact with error. Saith not the Scripture ‘Vobis dabo os et sapientiam, cui non poterunt resistere et contradicere omnes adversarii vestri?’ ”

La Croix smiled grimly. “I meant not that altogether, holy father,” he said; “I was looking to more practical consequences, such as the burnings, the breakings on the wheel, and the like, wherewith holy Church is wont to celebrate the victories which, as thou sayest, she is so certain to gain.”

“Nay,” said Angelo; “but if the heretics be convinced, they will doubtless abjure their errors, and so be reconciled to the Church.”

"Ay," said La Croix, "if they *be* convinced, but I trow they are a generation somewhat given to continue obstinate. Marvellous is it how often their errors are clearly pointed out to them, without their perceiving it! I myself have been present at not a few of these disputations; nor ever knew I the time when the heretics were not fully confuted; and rarely, when they had not to be burnt afterwards, for not adequately understanding the fact. Therefore, as I said before, the disputation itself seemeth to me to be a loss of good time and patience; and might, with advantage, be omitted altogether."

The ecclesiastic turned to him with a frowning brow. "Thou art profane, sir soldier," he said; "I would have thee beware lest thou find that the Church alloweth not a railing tongue to pass unrebuked, any more than she endureth heretical doctrine."

The group round La Croix broke into a laugh. "Brother Hugo," said one of the youths, "thou hadst best leave our comrade's tongue alone; the archbishop knoweth his value in these times too well to have any wish to meddle with it. But for him I wot these Valdesi had given us yet greater trouble than they have done; though, by the mass, it hath been no child's play as it is. But for him this same Conrad Biorno, whom they set such store by, would now be teaching heresy among the mountains, instead of learning sound doctrine within there from brother Leonardo."

"Tush," said the monk, "ye know how to make the most of your exploits against these wretched peasants; who have neither arms, nor discipline, nor knowledge of war. A gallant feat of arms, was it not, that thou, Gaston La Croix, with some five hundred

armed men, didst penetrate into the undefended district of Angrogna, and seize a handful of half-armed and wholly unprepared rustics ? A brave deed, truly ! and one that should entitle its doer to the lasting gratitude of the Church ! ”

This speech awakened the ire of Von Happenburgh, who had as yet taken no part in the conversation. “ Ho ! monk,” he cried, “ who art thou that talkest of unarmed peasants that know nothing of war ? I would thy superior would impose on thee, as a penance for that long tongue of thine, that thou shouldest be made to march in the van of the next party that is sent to force some of the infernal passes in these mountains ; where men have to advance in single file, with a few score of these same undisciplined peasants snugly ensconced in sheltered nooks among the rocks, taking aim at their leisure, at every crevice in thy armour—or else perched a hundred feet over thy head, ready to roll down stones which would crush the roof of thy convent like an egg-shell. I wot thou wouldest amend thy ideas respecting them right speedily.”

“ Ay, comrade,” said one of the youths, “ thou hast never looked with friendly eyes, or by our Lady, it were more fitting to say with a friendly eye, upon these mountaineers, since that day near Pommiers—but forgive me,” he added, seeing the deep flush that came over the veteran’s features ; “ that is but a scurvy jest ; thou couldst not help thyself, I ween, and for the rest thou hast exacted vengeance enough for the wound they dealt thee.”

“ Vengeance enough,” growled the other savagely ; “ by the fiend, I have not exacted one-half of the tale ; thinkest thou I have had vengeance enough while

the very churl that inflicted the wound not only still lives, but lives uninjured? He and I have an account to settle, which—but wherefore do I talk thus—how goes the day, brother Cuno?" he added, addressing another monk who at that moment appeared in the entrance.

"Excellently well," answered Cuno, "praised be our Lady and St. Dominic; the heretic striveth in vain to make reply to brother Leonardo, who hurleth text upon text at his adversary even as they were stones from a sling, and seemeth to know all that the most learned fathers have delivered as familiarly as his breviary. Biorno hath been driven to seek for an adjournment of the disputation, that he may have time to examine certain points advanced by our brother, which he admits he hath not hitherto considered."

"And hath the president granted the petition?" asked Hugo.

"Yea," replied Cuno, "he hath appointed the tenth day from hence, which is the festival of the blessed St. Nicolas, whereon to resume the controversy. Doubtless the heretic will then again be discomfited, as he hath been to-day."

"Ay, ay, who doubts it?" growled La Croix, as he and his companions proceeded to remount and form in due order to receive the Archbishop of Turin, to whose household they were attached. As they did so, the whole throng of visitors—bishops, abbots, civic functionaries, knights, nobles, together with a few ladies of high rank, began to issue forth from the entrance archway—all uniting in praises of Leonardo's learning and eloquence; and the dignitaries of the Church congratulating themselves on the decided suc-

cess which their champion had obtained in the discussion—all the more keenly felt, because on all former occasions the advantage, if not openly admitted, had at least tacitly been felt to be on the other side.

Meanwhile the proceedings of the day were being watched with keen interest by another party, very different in appearance from that above described. The figures that composed it were two men of middle age, small traders or craftsmen by their dress, accompanied by a youth, similarly attired, and a female, who appeared to be young, but her figure was too closely muffled for this fact to be clearly distinguished. Any one who was at the trouble of watching their movements might have observed that while they shrouded themselves as much as possible from observation, they listened with almost painful attention to every remark that fell from the various persons, who from time to time reported what was passing within. In particular the observation of Father Cuno, respecting the discomfiture of the Valdese, seemed to produce a great effect upon them: and no sooner had they heard of the adjournment of the disputation; than they retired hastily from the throng, and, entering the city, proceeded in silence to a small house in one of the least frequented streets of Turin. But the moment the door closed behind them, the younger man broke into a hasty exclamation.

"I do not believe it," he cried indignantly. "It is one of their vile inventions. Such do they always represent to be the issue of these arguments, whatever may have been the real result! Is it not enough that they punish us with fire and sword for holding the

faith, but that they must needs wrest the very truth of our lips to falsehood?"

"Calm thee, Ernest," said one of his companions, the father, as it seemed, of the damsel; "thou art too vehement. It signifieth little what they say of us, so only we hold the truth. Nor do I deem it unlikely that my father hath really demanded the adjournment they speak of. His strength may not be sufficiently recovered after his recent malady, to allow him to plead the Lord's cause with the vigour he would desire; or it may be as they say, that his opponent hath advanced some argument, which he would require time to weigh well before he replies to it. Surely it is no reproach to him if he hath done so. Worthy Sanzio," he pursued, turning to the third man of the party, "I thank thee for thy kind help and countenance. But to remain longer under thy roof, were to expose thee needlessly to danger. It were best that Ernest and I, and thou too, my Margherita, again assume our proper garments, and return without delay to our mountains. When the day appointed for the renewal of this discussion shall have arrived, it may be that we will again implore a few hours' hospitality. The Lord will reward thee for thy goodness to us; we cannot."

"Nay, speak not of that," said Sanzio; "after all, I shall remain thy debtor. A life saved among the crags of Mount Genevre more than outweighs a slight peril of fine or imprisonment. Comfort thee, fair damsel," he continued, turning to Margherita, who stood apart wrapped, as it seemed, in melancholy thought. "It is, as thou didst hear, but a delay of ten days. There is nought that need banish the

bloom from those fair cheeks, or call tears into those bright eyes. Ten days will soon be past."

"It is not that, it is not that," cried the maiden eagerly. "I feel convinced that they will never suffer my grandfather to depart at all, unless he should deny his faith, which thou knowest well he never will do. This promise, which they proclaim, that the disputants shall be suffered to depart uninjured, even if they continue in the same mind—oh, I trust it not; and do not thou trust it, my father! His only hope of escape is in our aid, if we can indeed afford him any!"

"My daughter," answered Arnold, "thou too must learn more self-command, or thou wilt make but an ill wife to Ernest, who is all too impetuous as it is. He needeth the bridle, not the spur, I trow. And wherefore dost thou disbelieve the archbishop's promise, solemnly made, as it was, in the face of day?"

"Have you forgotten Adrian Sprengen," said Margherita, "and the tale he told us three years ago? He had been accused of denying that there was any profit in the Sacrament of Baptism, and had been put on the rack to make him confess. Do you not remember how he made us all shudder at the history of his sufferings? Oh no, I remember now, you were away in Lombardy at the time. Well, he told us that they had promised him, if he would sign a confession of his errors, he should be set at liberty, and he was, as he said with tears of shame, persuaded in a moment of agony to do it; and they did set him at liberty. But before he had passed the convent gate he was arrested on a new charge; and if he had not, almost by a miracle, escaped from his dungeon, he would have been put to death after all as a heretic."

"I do remember hearing an imperfect account of it," said Arnold, "and I own the recollection alarms me. Tell me, Sanzio, thinkest thou Margherita has any solid ground for her suspicion?"

"I fear," replied the citizen, "if you press me on the point, I must say that I do. I saw no use in alarming you when no advantage could follow from it. But I have acquired, in various ways, which I need not recount, some knowledge of the secret proceedings of the Tribunal of the Holy Office; and I cannot deny that I have more than once known accused persons, after their acquittal, subjected to a new trial, on the ground that although the former proceedings were at an end, something had transpired in the course of the evidence to make it necessary that a fresh inquiry should be commenced on an altogether different count. They may argue that the archbishop's guarantee hath now expired; and that Conrad himself hath placed the matter on a new footing, by demanding a second disputation. I cannot disguise that there is danger of the worst, and am of Margherita's opinion that if we could do any thing to bring about his deliverance or flight it would be the best, if not the only hope of saving his life."

Arnold shook his head. "That were a vain hope," he said. "We have neither friends, money, nor influence. Little is done at Turin, as thou knowest, Sanzio, without all three of these; and nothing without at least one of them. And had we all, and more than all of these, the dungeons of the Inquisition are too strong, and their officers too many and too vigilant, to permit any to return from them into the world, to relate the tale of its horrors."

"But you forget," said Ernest, "that he hath not yet been transported thither. That much I myself have certainly ascertained. For the present, at all events, he is simply the abbot's guest; and as they have no suspicion of his good faith, he is probably not closely watched. Could we but find a friend within the walls of the convent, I should have some hope that we might accomplish his escape."

"A friend to the heretic Vaudes, and within the walls of a Dominican convent," cried Arnold; "call not that hope which is built on a foundation so sandy!"

"Nay," said Margherita, "but hear me. You may think my fancy extravagant, but there is one within the walls of the convent, whom I feel irresistibly impelled to appeal to, in the hope that he will help us in this sore necessity."

"And who is that, Margherita?" asked Ernest.

"Leonardo di Sivori himself," was the reply.

"Leonardo di Sivori!" exclaimed all her three auditors at once, in amazement. "What!" added Ernest, "Leonardo, the nominee of Father Ludovico; the instrument chosen for our more complete destruction; the Florentine student, who knows nothing of our people, but the worst calumnies that the tongue of slander can propagate! Margherita, thou dreamest! Nay, consider, were he even willing to aid us, which I can scarce believe possible, he could only do so at the peril, not only of his reputation and office, but at that of liberty, and, it might be, life itself. What can have put such a fancy into thy mind?"

"I will tell you," said the maiden. "You know that when my grandfather was so ill that they thought

he would not recover, I was several times allowed to see him. In the course of my visits to the convent, I more than once encountered Leonardo di Sivori, and I was struck by the gentle and kindly expression of his face. One of the men-at-arms, a Tyrolese by birth, told me a great deal about him. He said he had been stationed many years in Florence, and knew the student well. All men respected and loved him, not more for his learning than his goodness of heart. He told me he had himself once beheld him throw himself before a furious bull that had broken loose from the ring where they were baiting him, to save a little child, at the imminent risk of his own life; and when a deadly sickness visited Florence, which baffled the physicians, and nearly all who could, quitted the city, Leonardo continued to visit the poorest and most infected districts of the town, until the scourge was removed."

"And is this thy ground of hope of obtaining aid from him?" asked Arnold. "My poor child, thou hast yet to learn that a heretic is in their eyes a being cut off from all the claims and sympathies of humanity; and they who would freely peril their lives in behalf of the helpless and the sick, would account it sin to nourish the smallest sentiment of charity for one of our faith and nation."

"Do I not know it, my father?" said the damsel. "Can a daughter of our people have forgotten that every man's hand is against us; though, blessed be God, our hand is not against every man? But for brother Leonardo; I have not yet told thee all. My informant said that it was generally noticed, with some displeasure, that he visited the

quarter in which the Jews reside, and attended the beds of their sick and dying, as freely as those of his Christian brethren. I could not but think that one whose heart is thus open and liberal in its mercy, would not exclude even a Vaude from it."

Arnold again shook his head. "It proves him a generous and noble-hearted man, I grant; but he was not bound by his vow of obedience to refuse help to them as he is to us. And yet, I know not what better we can do, or indeed what we can do at all, if we try not this. How say you, Sanzio; think you there can be any ground for hope?"

"But little, I fear," answered Sanzio. "Yet, I too know not what better to attempt. How do you propose, maiden," he resumed, turning to Margherita, "to gain speech with Leonardo di Sivori? Know you that he rarely stirs abroad, and that the convent gates are closely watched, and no entrance is permitted?"

"I do know it," replied Margherita; "but a woman's wit, who is seeking to save one she loves from destruction will, be sure, prove too strong for their bolts and bars, and too keen for their utmost vigilance."

"A woman's wit!" rejoined Ernest hastily. "Surely you cannot dream of essaying this desperate enterprise yourself? No; if the attempt is to be made, I must be the one to make it. There may, there must be, danger; and—"

"Danger! yes," replied Margherita. "But why am not I to share it? In other lands it may be woman's lot to be shielded by those she loves from all that may threaten her; but it is the birthright of a Vaude girl to share every danger that may assail her

parent, or—" She looked at Ernest, and broke off the sentence with a deep blush.

"Nay, but dearest," said Ernest, bending over her, and speaking almost in a whisper, "there may be danger to thee, such as cannot assail one of us. Part of the nuncio's train is quartered in the convent; and report says they are infamous, even among those of their profession, for their licentious violence. If one of them—"

"Fear not, my Ernest," said the maiden, her cheek still glowing with the same deep crimson; "such evil shall never befall thy Margherita. See here!" and she showed him a small dagger concealed in her girdle; "this will always shield me from the worst, should no other way of escape be open."

The three men looked at one another with faces of anxiety and doubt.

"O my father!" exclaimed Margherita, once more, flinging herself on his breast as she spoke, "I implore thee, let me go on this errand. I feel an overpowering conviction that it will prosper in my hands, under God's blessing, if thou dost allow it. And oh! think what a source of endless sorrow it will be to us hereafter, if thou shouldst refuse, and he should be lost to us in consequence. O Ernest! if thou dost indeed love me, plead for me, that this may be granted me."

Arnold hid his face, and made a mute gesture of assent; while Ernest, pressing her to his bosom, exclaimed, "Go, my Margherita; and the blessing of God, and of thy beloved, will go with thee."

CHAPTER XVII.

This murderous shaft, that's shot,
Hath not yet lighted ; and our safest way
Is, to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse ;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away : There's warrant in that theft,
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.

SHAKESPEARE.

MEANWHILE Sivan had quitted the hall as soon as the proceedings had concluded, and escaping as well as he could from the expressions of approval and compliment that were showered upon him, retired to his favourite walk in the abbot's garden. He was exhausted by the excitement he had gone through, and depressed, as good men ever are, by the unsatisfying and ungenial nature of religious controversy. It was true that he had had the advantage of his opponent in the discussion ; though chiefly, as he was quite aware, because Conrad had not had the same advantages of study and access to the writings of the learned, which he had himself enjoyed in so uncommon a degree. As long as the argument had been confined to Scripture itself, his antagonist had fully maintained his ground ; but when it passed on to the interpretation placed on texts by the early fathers, and to the practice of primitive antiquity, the superior

learning of Father Justin's pupil became evident. Conrad found himself unable to answer some of his arguments, based on certain passages in authors with which he was but imperfectly acquainted ; and, with a candour which moved Sivan's admiration, had admitted the fact, and requested time to peruse the authors referred to—a circumstance which the Church party had regarded as a direct acknowledgment of defeat. But though Sivan had succeeded in convincing his audience, and to some extent in silencing his adversary, he was, as we have said, dispirited. Conrad, he could see plainly, was not won over. He doubted whether he had made any real impression on him : and where was the advantage of victory, unless that accompanied it ? He had been, moreover, greatly moved by the simple, yet venerable appearance of the Valdese pastor, his quiet earnestness, his reverent handling of sacred things. It was plain to him, that whether or not Conrad might be mistaken in some of his opinions, yet his conviction was honest, and his motives pure. He seemed to have the cause of Christ, and of His Gospel, as strongly at heart as man could have it. Was this a man to be shunned, denounced, execrated, as the very child of perdition, as he was commonly represented ? Sivan had seen too many instances of the world's injustice towards those whom it assailed with such charges, not to pause and reflect ere he concurred in them. Phares had suffered death as a rebel, Socrates as an atheist, Hermas as an apostate ; yet it was impossible to conceive charges more groundless than these had been. Might not this fourth instance be of the same character as the others ; and Conrad Biorno, though reprobated as a heretic, be a true disciple of

his Lord notwithstanding ? And, lastly, many of his remarks—new to him, if not in matter, at least in the way in which they were put—recurred to his memory, and raised doubts in his mind respecting points which he had hitherto regarded as containing no difficulty. He was glad that ten days would elapse before the renewal of the discussion, as that would give him space to examine fully into these matters, and quiet his mind respecting them. Meanwhile it was at least a comfort to reflect that his opponent was in no peril of suffering any severities on account of his faith ; and that, whatever the effect upon his mind, he would be allowed to depart uninjured in body.

While he pondered thus, one of the under-porters of the convent approached, and informed him that a stranger—a student, as he judged, from the convent at Florence, to which Leonardo belonged—desired to be admitted to his presence, having tidings of importance to communicate.

“Ha!” exclaimed Sivan, “a student, and from Florence! Can it be Luigi, or a messenger from Father Justin? May I pray you to conduct him hither? The lord abbot has been pleased to allow me to use his garden as my own.”

The servant retired, and a few moments afterwards a youth of low stature entered the garden, and advanced slowly towards Sivan. He wore the dress described by the porter; but, to the great surprise of the person he came to visit, his face and figure were altogether unknown to him. There was a pause of mutual embarrassment, which was at last broken by Sivan.

“Good Morrow, fair sir!” he said. “If, as they

tell me, you come from Florence, your presence is most welcome. Are you the bearer of any message from my brother, or haply from the prior of San Guiseppe?"

"No," answered the youth, in a low tone, trembling as he spoke with such agitation that it could not fail to attract the other's attention. "Are you ill," he said, "or overwearied with travel? What may this mean?" he added, starting back in amazement, as the youth fell on his knee before him: while his broad-leaved hat falling off, disclosed the features of a young and beautiful woman, though deadly pale, and overwhelmed, as it seemed, with terror or confusion.

"Forgive me!" she exclaimed, in faltering accents, "reverend student, and noble signor, that I have dared to gain access to thee by this stratagem! If thou hast ever been in the dire extremity of fearing to lose one who was dear to thee as thy own life, thou wilt know there is nothing so wild and desperate that the heart will not essay, rather than renounce its hope altogether."

"Lady," said Sivan, "I understand you not, nor can I think, but that you have sought this interview, mistaking me for another."

"No, no," said Margherita; "it is thou that I seek, Leonardo di Sivori, the Florentine student, the opponent of Conrad Biorno in the disputation of to-day. I am Conrad's grandchild, signor. All our hearts are centered in him. Should he be lost to us, the hope and joy of our life will be taken away. Oh! wilt thou not aid us in this extremity? The world speaks ill of us, as I know; but if what I have

heard of thee be true, thou accountest none cut off from thy charity who wear the image of their common Creator."

"Again, I understand you not, maiden," said Sivan, gazing with involuntary admiration, as he spoke, on the dark locks and eyes, and slightly sunburnt complexion, which reminded him of a face that had long passed away from existence. "Wherefore fearest thou that aught of evil will befall thy kinsman? Should he in any respect change the opinions he has hitherto held—as I freely own to thee that I hope that he may—such change need not distress thee, for it will be honestly made. Should he still retain his former conviction, he will be permitted to depart in all safety and honour. Dismiss thy fears, then; for a few days will surely behold him return again to his home and family."

"Ay, so they say!" she exclaimed. "Pardon me once again, if my words offend thee; but thou art a stranger in this city, and knowest not the ways of this fearful place. Had I any hope that we should ever see Conrad Biorno restored to us in safety, except through thine aid, I should never have dared to intrude thus bold and unwomanly upon thee: but, oh! believe me, unless he forswear his faith, which is as impossible as that yonder sun should turn back in the heavens, he will never be suffered to quit these walls alive."

"How?" said Sivan. "Know you not, then, that the Archbishop of Turin hath given a promise that he shall be released when the disputation are ended?"

"Alas! yes," said Margherita; "but—how shall I say it without wounding thine ear?—a promise may

be kept to the letter, yet its spirit and purport set at nought."

" You alarm yourself needlessly," said Sivan kindly; " unless, indeed, which I can hardly think, you have some special reason for believing"—he broke off suddenly, for at that moment he heard footsteps approaching the garden door. " It is probably a servant of the convent," he said. " Resume your hat, maiden, I pray you, and as soon as he is departed"—as he spoke the door opened, and, to his great embarrassment, he beheld Father Ludovico enter, accompanied by the Abbot of the convent. He knew not how to act. It was vain to hope that the Inquisitor's keen eye would fail to detect Margherita's disguise; and how could he account for her presence there, without giving him reason to suspect that some treachery was in progress, the consequence of which would be highly injurious to the prisoner? Fortunately the spot at which they were standing was concealed by a thicket of shrubs, so that their figures could not be seen from the gate; and close at hand was a small summer-house, which had been a favourite place of retreat to Sivan during the months of his residence in Turin.

" Enter here," he said hastily; " they will probably pass on to the farther end of the garden; and as soon as they are out of sight I will conduct thee to the gate."

They entered as he spoke, and, closing the door behind them, anxiously awaited the approach of the new comers. Presently their steps were heard slowly nearing the summer-house; but instead of passing on, they paused under the shadow of a large plane-

tree, that overshadowed it, and seated themselves on a bench placed among its roots.

"Let us rest here awhile," said Ludovico; "the air is refreshing after the heat of those close rooms; and we can here talk in safety. Thou wert asking me of this Biorno, wert thou not?"

"Yes," said the Abbot. "If I understand thee aright, thou thinkest that there is but little hope that he will make submission to the holy father."

"Very little," replied Father Ludovico drily.

"And wherefore?" replied the Abbot. "To my thought he seemed shrewdly touched by some points advanced by brother Leonardo."

"Not touched by conviction," said the Inquisitor; "he was simply unacquainted with the passages quoted by his antagonist. When he hath studied them, he will be ready with his answer respecting them, as he is on other subjects; nay, he will probably be more confirmed in his opinion than before, unless he is different from those who have hitherto come under my hands."

"Is that thine opinion?" said the Abbot. "To what end, then, is this disputation held, and why did you rejoice as you were just now doing, at the advantage gained by brother Leonardo? Methinks if the heretic persist in his opinions, and continue to refuse obedience to the Church, we are but where we were."

"Not so," answered Ludovico. "It is true I have never known one of these heretics prevailed upon by argument to recant; but I have known not a few who have been induced by sharper measures to do so. See you not if this Biorno's obstinacy should give way when subjected to the question, and he be prevailed

upon to make public recantation, all who have been present to-day will ascribe it to the force of the reasoning advanced by the champion of the Church ? On the other hand, should he still continue obstinate, after every means has been tried, and we should be compelled to doom him to the stake ; public sympathy, which is in general dangerously excited on such occasions, will be but coldly felt towards one who has been unable to defend his errors, and yet has refused to abandon them.”

“ Pardon me, my brother,” said the Abbot, “ if I fail to see the wisdom of your plan. I am, as thou knowest, but newly appointed to this monastery, and have never hitherto known aught of the proceedings of the Holy Office. But it seems to me that there is risk; I had almost said certainty, that when the prisoner is set at liberty again, he will proclaim the means whereby his retractation hath been wrung from him. How, too, would such a conversion as this answer the purpose of the Archbishop, for which he hath instituted these disputationes ? It is his object, as I understand, to convince these Valdesi — their barbs, that is, ‘as they call them—of the truth of the doctrines taught by the Church, in order that they may return to their countrymen and impart it to them also.”

The Inquisitor smiled darkly. “ The Holy Office,” he said, “ allows not its secrets to transpire so readily ; and as regards the schemes of the Archbishop, I care not if I tell thee, my early and trusted friend, that they are the fancies of an amiable but weak-minded man ; whom it may be well to soothe and amuse ; but to whose hands it would be madness to entrust the conduct of affairs like these. Trust me, Stephano,

one thing alone will extinguish heresy among these mountaineers, and that is the extinction of the entire race. Their belief is the heritage of centuries; the very keystone of their nationality. They imbibe its tenets with their mothers' milk; they breathe it, as though it had been the air of their mountains. Neither bribe, nor threat, least of all, argument, will avail to change a belief whose root lies so deep as this. Think how many times during the last three centuries, the Church had put forth her utmost strength, both to convince, and to crush; yet she hath lost ground, rather than gained it, in the contest. My utmost hope is to prevent the spread of the evil into adjoining lands, and confine the infection within the diseased regions. By the joint employment of reason and force this may be effected. It is visionary to look for more!"

" You mean, then," said the other, " to apply the question to this sturdy peasant if he continue inflexible. But once more, hath not the Archbishop's word been passed that the controversy ended, the disputants shall be suffered to go free?"

Ludovico smiled more sternly than before. " When the controversy *is* ended," he said, " he shall receive his freedom. But that, I wot, is not ended, nor like to be yet awhile! We do not permit our controversies to end with so imperfect and unsatisfactory an issue. Yet, mark me, Stephano, it is not my fault if faith seemeth to be broken with these heretics. I give no such guarantees, nor do I approve of others giving them. My paramount duty to the Church and his Holiness is to suppress and hold in check heresy so far as I may. I may regret that my colleagues should be

weak or ill-judging ; but I cannot suffer their weakness and folly to mar my work."

" And what is your immediate purpose, if I may ask ? " inquired the Abbot. " Do you mean to wait till St. Nicolas's day is past, or take stern measures with the Valdese at once ? "

" I have not yet fully determined," said Ludovico. " It is my intention to send brother Leonardo to him this evening, and urge him to consent to such an admission as may justify us in sparing his life ; though scarce in allowing him to return to his home and friends again. I have but little hope of such a result ; yet the attempt may as well be made ; and there will be more prospect of success through Leonardo's agency than that of any other."

" Yes," said the Abbot, " I observed that Biorno seemed much impressed by the gentleness of his demeanour and mode of reasoning."

" Leonardo di Sivori," returned the Nuncio, " is like his teacher the prior of San Guiseppe, a man of learning and ability, and upright and amiable withal ; but soft-hearted and wanting in decision. Such weapons as these are good for holiday use and show, but they are too easily bent for such stern work as we have in hand. Yet he hath well performed thus far the task for which he was selected, and hath justified my judgment respecting him. Know you where he may be found ? "

" In his own chamber, doubtless," replied his companion, " he rarely quits it ; and I observed that he seemed fatigued as he left the hall to-day."

" I must see him this evening," said Ludovico, " and send him to Conrad, else the impression he

hath made may be effaced ere they meet. The report which I hear from him respecting the prisoner's present disposition of mind will materially influence me as to the course which it is expedient to adopt towards him."

"I will send him to you," said the Abbot, rising to depart; "will you receive him here or at my lodging?"

"Nay," said the Nuncio, also rising, "thou needest not leave me; I will accompany thee to thy chamber, and thou mayest send for him to meet me there." They moved off together, and immediately afterwards Sivan's ear caught the sound of the garden door as it shut after them.

During this conversation Margherita had sat like a marble image, grasping for support the back of the bench on which she rested. Once or twice, when the Inquisitor intimated his fatal intentions towards Conrad, her features were convulsed with pain; and Sivan half feared she was about to faint. But her resolute spirit sustained her through the ordeal; until the sound of the closing door assured her of their departure, and then, hiding her face in her hands, she burst into tears.

Sivan was scarcely less moved at what he had heard. During the journey from Florence, he had accidentally overheard some of the soldiers, attached to Father Ludovico's train, describing some of the tortures to which prisoners were subjected by the sentence of the Inquisition at Turin. He was fully persuaded that the greater part of what they related was exaggeration; indeed, they had themselves admitted that they spoke in a great measure from vague rumour: but the bare notion of his being made instrumental in inflicting

such barbarities, and especially on one who had so greatly moved his interest and respect, filled him with disgust and indignation. The true nature, also, of Father Ludovico's designs, divested of all the artificial colouring with which they had hitherto been overlaid, and exhibited, as they now were, in their naked reality, was even more revolting. Could this, indeed, be one holding high authority in the Church of Christ,—the bosom confidant of its chief shepherd,—who could talk in this cold, unmoved manner of the destruction of an entire nation, as the sole means of extirpating error? Could such a man know what spirit he was of, who could even calmly contemplate such a possibility? Was it thus that the Apostles had sought to overcome man's obstinate unwillingness to embrace the truth? Nay, was not this the very weapon that he had seen wielded again and again against truth, but never in her favour? Again, the sophistry with which the Archbishop's guarantee was dealt with, and its plain meaning evaded, what could be more dishonest? What righteous cause had ever been, or could be, advanced by means like these? He thought of Father Girolamo, and the picture he had drawn of the worldliness and vices of the rulers of the Church: and of Father Justin's reluctant admissions. Sooth to say, they had occurred to him many times during his residence in Turin: but here was, indeed, a most grievous confirmation of his words. He would fain have dwelt longer on these reflections, but he felt that he must make up his mind without delay as to the course he was to pursue. His mind was a chaos of doubts and difficulties: but of one thing he was fully resolved,—that Conrad Biorno should never, through his agency,

or with his consent, be subjected to the cruelties in preparation for him.

On a sudden it occurred to him that the very measures adopted by Father Ludovico might prove the means of saving the prisoner. He saw that the Inquisitor had no suspicion of him, and probably intended to entrust the keys of Conrad's chamber to him. He might protract the interview with the Valdese until late in the night; and thus they might be enabled, under cover of it, to effect their escape to the mountains; for thither he was resolved to proceed, if only to satisfy his mind as to the real character of this people, so corrupt in their lives and detestable in their doctrines, if popular report was to be trusted; but so simple-hearted and amiable, if he were to judge of them by the specimens he had himself encountered.

He turned to his companion. She had again fallen on one knee before him, raising her eyes to his face in mute supplication, more moving than any eloquence that language could have supplied.

"Fear not," he said, answering her look, "Conrad shall be saved, if it be in my power to save him. But thou must not delay here. Every minute thou remainest is full of peril to thee and to him. Tell me, if I can accomplish the deliverance of thy grandfather from his chamber to-night, and place him without the walls of the convent, hast thou the means of facilitating his further escape?"

"I have," replied Margherita. "We have friends here in Turin who will supply us with all things needful for the purpose. Once clear of the city, he will be safe."

"It is well," rejoined Sivan. "You see yonder oak,

a bowshot from the southern wall of the garden. Be in readiness to receive us at that spot an hour after midnight. Nay, stay not to thank me: thou shalt render thy thanks, if thou wishest it, when we are safe in thy mountain home."

As he spoke he unlocked the small door that communicated with the open country; and, hastily dismissing Margherita, closed it after him, and turned in the direction of a wood at a little distance, where he resolved to remain concealed until nightfall.

All fell out as he had hoped. He lingered about until the hour of compline had arrived, and hence did not receive Father Ludovico's summons until late in the evening. Obtaining, as he had anticipated, the keys of Conrad's chamber, he proceeded thither, and stated to him all that had transpired, together with the preparations which had been made for ensuring his escape. Here, however, he encountered the only real difficulty of his undertaking. Conrad for a long time peremptorily refused to fly; nor could all Sivan's arguments and entreaties bend his resolution. At last, when his visitor assured him that, if he still remained immovable, he would himself, at every risk, publicly denounce Father Ludovico for his treachery, as the only remaining means of clearing his own honour from participation in a scheme so nefarious, the old man, knowing the fatal consequences which would ensue on such a step, could resist no longer. An hour after midnight they quitted the cell, passed through the convent garden, and found their friends waiting for them; and, before effectual pursuit could be made, were safe among the fastnesses in which Conrad's home was situated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

There was a deep ravine that lay
Yet darkling in the Moslem's way ;
Fit spot to make invaders rue
The many fallen before the few.
And on each side, aloft and wild,
Huge cliffs and toppling crags were piled ;
The guards with which young freedom lines
The pathway to her mountain shrines.

MOORE.

AUTUMN and winter had passed away and spring had given place to early summer, when we once more resume the thread of our narrative. The scene to which the reader is now introduced, resembled nothing as yet described in these pages. Nature might here be beheld in all her native wildness and sublimity, with scarce a trace to mark the presence and sovereignty of man. In the foreground lay a small mountain tarn, bordered on every side but one by rocks rising abruptly to the height of several hundred feet, mantled with evergreens, and surmounted by groves of chestnut and mulberry. Behind these were similar formations of rock, broken into endless variety of shape, and fringed with forests of the hardier pine ; precipice soaring above precipice, until at a height which it wearied the eye to reach, they passed into peaks wrapped in a ves-

ture of eternal snow. The mixture of colours was such as none but mountain scenery presents. Beneath was the dark pool and the red wall of rock, contrasting with the soft green and gold of the foliage which overhung them. Above were greyer masses of crag relieved by the darker green of the pine woods; while high over all the pure white summits stood boldly forward against a background of richest blue. It was a scene whose memory even the casual visitor, who has but once beheld it, can never lay aside; but for those whose home has been fixed amid such lavish display of nature's beauties it has a deep silent influence, which colours the flow of thought and prints itself indelibly on the character.

On the platform which surmounted the lowest range of precipices, sheltered from above by an over-hanging mass of stone, and dovetailed, as it were, into a niche in the rock, was a small cabin, evidently of hasty construction. If the object of the inhabitants was security against surprise, the spot was well chosen. The only communication with the valley below was by a narrow ledge, that wound downwards to the shore of the little tarn that lay beneath it; while above, the dry bed of what had once been a mountain torrent, afforded an avenue of escape in case of need, to the inaccessible fastnesses that frowned overhead. On the little terrace, in front of the hut, a family group was gathered to partake of the evening meal. They were all old acquaintances of the reader. In the centre was seated Conrad Biorno, with his silver hair and placid features, conversing with Arnold and Ernest; though the attention of the latter was frequently diverted in order to address some observa-

tion to Margherita, who, looking lovelier than ever in her mountain dress, was engaged in preparing the simple materials of their supper. At a few paces distant, Sivan, still wearing his student's garb, was leaning against the rock, gazing with silent admiration on the rosy tint—that rare and peculiar beauty of Alpine scenery—which, as the sunset advanced, began to spread itself over the snowy peaks, gradually deepening in colour until sky, and mountain, and forest were bathed in a rich flood of crimson light; suggesting, to an imaginative mind, the hectic flush which is sometimes seen on the cheek of beauty when it lingers on the very threshold of its departure from earth.

At length the maiden addressed him. “Signor,” she said, “thou art the only visitor we have ever had, whom I account worthy to dwell among our mountains. Thou seemest to be never weary of gazing at their beauties. I could almost wish thou hadst been born a Vaude, that thou mightest appreciate fully its loveliness as none but a Vaude can.”

“Think you so, Margherita?” answered Sivan; “beauty is beauty to me all the same, wheresoever it may be found; and though I may still love the fair face of my native Florence, yet do I freely own that her loveliness cannot vie with thy landscapes. I misdoubt I could have admired them more, even had I seen them with the eyes of a true Vaude.”

Conrad looked with a pleased smile at his guest. “Thou wilt win our Margherita’s heart,” he said, “if thou talkest thus. She runs wild in her admiration of our native rocks and valleys; and to praise them is to find a sure way to her goodwill. We shall have

Ernest waxing jealous of thee. But cheer up, good youth, to-morrow is not far off, and by the hour of noon thy jealousy, if thou feelest any, will be at an end. And so thy wedding-day is to-morrow," he added in a lower tone, and drawing Margherita towards him. "I remember thy mother's wedding-day, ay, and thy mother's mother. But we will not talk of them to-night. Ernest, thou must be kind to her. She comes of a race that have ever made good wives, and well repay the care their husbands bestow upon them."

"And that reminds me," said Arnold, "that it is time that thou, youth, take thy departure. Thou hast many needful preparations to make, and thy home lies many miles distant. So farewell till noon to-morrow, and do thou take thy leave of thy bride for the last time."

A slight shade of sadness, they scarce knew why, seemed to fall on the party at these words; but it soon past away. Conrad watched the lovers as they took their lingering farewell of each other; and then, as Ernest's figure was seen descending the mountain-path, he turned again to Sivan.

"My guest," he said, "it rejoiceth me that thou likest the spot wherein our lot hath been cast; but yet more that thou canst join heartily in our humble worship, and approve our simple doctrines. The conversations thou and I have held respecting the differences of our Churches have been full of profit and consolation to me. I feel grateful to thee for verifying a belief I have ever entertained, that the wise and pure of heart, even amongst those who think not as we do in many things, could they but know us as we

really are, would be in the main of one heart and soul with us."

"It is even so, my worthy host," said Sivan. "There is nought in thy creed or practice, that need forbid unity between thee and any member of the Church of Christ. Nay, I deem that on the whole, there is a nearer resemblance to be found among thy people to the usage of primitive times, than can be met with in countries that acknowledge the obedience that thou dost disown. But I hold there is no need that I should repudiate the articles, or lay aside the practices of the community of which by the providence of God I am a member, to enable me to extend the right hand of fellowship to thee. I could say to thee, as I did to Margherita just now, when she spoke of the beauty of the scene around us, the love of Christ is the love of Christ, wherever it may be found; and His true disciple—though he may cling to usages and modes of thought wherein he hath been bred up, and which have become part and parcel of his inner life—will yet love and reverence all who love truly and serve faithfully the same Master. At least be sure of this, my venerable friend, that were thy doctrine and practice really known in their simple integrity, there are thousands and thousands, who now regard them with fear and distrust, who would say the same that I do."

Conrad's eyes glistened. "Such, too, is my belief," he said. "And the day will come, in God's good time, when all men shall acknowledge it also."

"I love to hear thee say so," said Margherita, "but I fear me that all our pastors think not thus. Ernest told me but yesterday, that the pastor of his village, Gaspar Beltrami, thou knowest, hath done

little of late but inveigh bitterly against the Bishop of Rome, whom he declares to be the Man of Sin, spoken of by St. Paul, and the Antichrist of St. John. Yea, and he adds, that it behoveth all Christians to stand aloof, and to have no fellowship with him, or those that acknowledge his authority: and Ernest thinks that his discourse is partly levelled at thee for—”

A shade of sadness passed over Conrad's cheerful face. “Hush! my daughter,” he said, “let us not trouble our guest with brother Gaspar's sentiments. I spoke to him on the subject but a few days since, and it grieved me much to hear him. He is a good and devoted man; and it ever paineth me that such should forget so capital an article of their faith, as the charity that hopeth and believeth all things. But enough of this; let us change the theme. Thou wert asking me but now, worthy Leonardo, to relate to thee some of the more remarkable passages in the history of our people. Shall I tell thee of that terrible day in the valley of Pragela, when our great-grandsires were assailed by an armed foe in the depth of winter; and the women and children were compelled to retreat almost to the very summits of the mountains, and died by hundreds of frost and cold—or of that scene which I myself can remember, when I was a stripling of nineteen, when the Archbishop's troops blockaded the mouth of the cave, and four hundred infants, with their mothers, were suffocated by the fires they kindled—or shall I tell thee of the martyrs, who suffered torture and death for the faith; of those who perished at the stake in Pignerol, or in the valley of Frassiniere; or of Catelin Girard, and his memorable reply, when called upon to renounce his belief—or of

the encounter, scarce ten years back, in the commune of Prali, and the fate of the seven hundred robbers, of whom one alone was spared? But Arnold could best describe that to thee, for he was present at the conflict; and he it was who sheltered and preserved the fugitive. What was his name, Arnold, for it has escaped my memory?"

"Ulric von Happenburgh," answered Arnold. "He is still living, and in the service of the Pope; but he feels, as I hear, but small gratitude for the mercy shown him."

"Ulric von Happenburgh!" exclaimed Sivan. "Surely I know that name. Was he not, I pray you, a man of rather short stature, but enormous breadth of shoulder, with light hair, and a sinister expression of face, not a little increased by the loss of one eye?"

"That is he exactly," answered Arnold. "It was on the occasion to which my father refers, that he lost the sight of his eye. Would you like to hear the narrative of that day? It would illustrate many a passage in the history of our country."

Sivan, who was not only interested in the remarkable people among whom he was at present residing, but was also desirous of knowing how far the story told by Ulric himself of the incident in question, was to be relied on, gave a ready assent. He had heard it, it should be mentioned, from Von Happenburgh's own lips, during the voyage from Livorno to Genoa; when the latter had been pressed to relate it by his comrades, who wanted some relief from the monotony of the voyage.

"It was early in the summer," began Arnold, "just ten years ago, when tidings reached us that our

enemies having found every effort fail to shake the firmness of our attachment to our ancient faith, had not only gathered near Turin a more powerful army than any we had yet encountered, but had even proclaimed a crusade against us, as though we had been the avowed enemies of God and man. We heard that they had sent heralds into every country of Europe, inviting every where the robber and the mercenary soldier to aid in our extermination ; promising them the plunder of our fields and villages, ay, and they scrupled not to add the honour of our wives and daughters, as the reward of their service. Day after day did fresh rumours reach us of the arrival of new troops of ruffians, whose sole thoughts were of lust and plunder, to swell the host of the invader ; and day after day the cheeks of our women grew paler as they heard. But their faith failed them not ; and as for our hearts, they but rose the higher as the dangers deepened and multiplied. Thou rememberest those days, my father?" he continued, turning to Conrad.

" Right well," said the pastor. " Can I ever forget the calm fortitude of those two blessed saints, who are now with their Lord, thy wife and mine ? Ay, my Margherita, thy mother did, indeed, show a glorious example of what a Vaude woman should be in time of danger ! and much of the constancy which all displayed, was owing to her influence. But we must not speak of her, or we shall never reach the end of the tale. Proceed, Arnold."

" Among other reports that had reached us," resumed the narrator, " was one relating to this Ulric von Happenburgh, who it was said had been

engaged in mountain warfare against the Swiss in the army of Charles of Burgundy, and was notorious for his daring and cruelty. He had been appointed to lead the first expedition against us ; and would advance, it was generally thought, by the valley of Angrogna. Thither, accordingly, our main force had been despatched to keep the pass, by which alone the foe could penetrate. I had been sent on a message by our commander to Pommiers, where some few of our comrades had been left to guard the women and children. We were just coming out of the church, where a solemn supplication for divine protection had been offered, when I beheld the helmets of soldiers gleaming on the summit of the defile that led downwards from the north-west. It was well we were all met together, and armed for battle, for there would have been no time to make preparation. We had barely time to draw our swords, and rush at our utmost speed to blockade the narrowest part of the pass, before the whole body of the enemy, seven hundred strong, as we afterwards learned, with their leader himself bearing the standard in the van, was seen rushing down the rocky way, in the hope of taking the village by surprise."

"And what force had you?" said Sivan. "If the bulk of your array was at Angrogna, the enemy must have greatly outnumbered you."

"That did they," replied Arnold. "We could scarce muster one man to their ten ; but then we had our wives and children to fight for as well as ourselves. We met the enemy, as I said, at the narrowest point of the pass, and had just time ere they came up to throw two pine-trees, which were lying by

the roadside, across the passage. Behind these our swords presented an impassable wall, while our companions in the rear brought up fresh timber and stones to add to the barricade. While the conflict was raging with doubtful success, I and twenty others, traversing a narrow path that wound round the face of the cliff, gained the top of the precipice that rose immediately over their heads. Silently we loosened some of the massive stones that lay piled around us, and rolled them over the edge of the ravine. They fell with a heavy crash on the rear of the detachment, crushing at least a dozen men in the descent. I shall never forget the shriek that burst from them when they saw that they were shut in on every side, and could offer no effectual resistance. Some of them tried to mount again the road by which they had advanced, but it was so steep that an armed man would have some difficulty in mounting it at all; and how were they to climb it in the teeth of a determined enemy with every advantage of position? Others rushed frantically on, endeavouring to force the lower end of the pass; but the barricade was now greatly increased in strength, and in their despair they struck and impeded one another. Meanwhile darts, arrows, and stones continued to rain down upon them, scarce one of which missed its aim; until their numbers were so reduced, that we leaped down on them with our swords to complete the slaughter. At this spectacle the remnant that yet survived, flung away their weapons, and, falling upon their knees, implored our mercy. That was the most dreadful moment of the day; but we knew we could not spare them. It was impossible for us to have kept them as prisoners;

and, alas! it was vain to hope that we could trust their honour."

"Dreadful, indeed!" exclaimed Sivan. "I question not the necessity; but it must have been a terrible one to brave men. And did all really perish?"

"All but one," replied Arnold. "As we came down sword in hand upon them, one man who was lying dead as we thought amid a heap of corpses, suddenly leaped on to the top of the pile, and from thence with a desperate bound contrived to reach a projecting crag, and, by a vast exertion of strength, to swing himself on to the top of the precipice, opposite to that on which we stood. Twenty arrows at the same instant told every crevice of his armour; but one alone—that one discharged from my bow—penetrated the bars of his visor; and struck, as it seemed by a mortal blow, he fell headlong over the crags into the torrent beneath him."

"And was that Ulric von Happenburgh?" asked Sivan.

"It was," said Arnold. "No man of less strength of sinew could have made the leap by which he escaped from the defile; nor could a frame less hardy than his have endured the sufferings he afterwards underwent. On the night after the battle I was returning to the main body at Angrogna, when I thought I heard groans proceeding from the channel of the torrent, which was still crusted over with a layer of frozen snow. Receiving no answer to my inquiry, I descended into the bed of the stream, and there beneath the hollow formed by the ice, I beheld a man, whom I in a moment recognized as the same that had fallen from the rock, apparently in the agonies of

death. It was impossible to slay him in cold blood, and equally impossible to leave him to make his escape, or, as was more likely, to die of cold and famine. I supported him to a neighbouring hut, and sent a message to my wife to have him conveyed to our house. There he was nursed and cared for until his strength was restored, and he was then exchanged against one of our comrades, who had fallen into the hands of the enemy."

"And how did he demean himself while under your roof?" inquired Sivan.

"At first he was friendly and grateful, they said," answered Arnold; "but on learning, as he shortly did, that it was my hand that had discharged the fatal shaft, he grew from that hour sullen and reserved, and departed at last with scarce a word of courtesy. A few weeks afterwards a considerable sum of money was sent me by the hand of the soldier who had been exchanged against him, with a message from Ulric, purporting that a suitable recompense had now been made for the service my wife had done him; and that he hoped one day to repay me for my good service also, and quite as richly."

"Ay," said Sivan, "and I wot he has not forgotten his resolution. I heard him tell the tale, as I sailed with him from Livorno to Genoa, though the facts sound somewhat different, good Arnold, in thy mode of narration. But he concluded with a fearful oath, which it makes my blood run cold to recall, that he would have his revenge on thee and thine at some future day."

"I nothing doubt it," said Arnold, "nor should I wonder if he makes an attempt ere many days have

gone over our heads, to accomplish his purpose. It was too late in the year when my father and thou made your escape, for them to venture on pursuit. We were safe during the winter and spring; but now that the passes are open, I look every day for the renewal of the violence of past years. Ha!" he exclaimed, springing up as he spoke, "there is some one coming up the pass even now; ascend the crag, Margherita, and tell us who it is."

The maiden obeyed, and in a few minutes returned with the intelligence, that the new comer was Gaspar Beltrami, the pastor of San Martin, and that he was evidently on his way to their cabin.

Conrad looked grieved. "I half expected this," he muttered; "leave me, my children. It were better I saw brother Gaspar alone. Thou too, my guest," he continued, as the other two rose to depart, "hadst better join them; it would be nought but unnecessary pain to thee, to be present at our interview."

"Nay," said Sivan, "I pray you let me remain. Fear not that aught that can be said, would provoke me to anger. I would fain see and judge for myself, how men like him speak and think of us."

"As you will, my guest," rejoined Conrad, "and in sooth, it were too late now, for Gaspar is already ascending the path from the pool, and must ere this have seen thee."

Nothing more was said on either side, until their visitor joined them. Sivan looked at him with keen interest. He was a tall thin figure, with a physiognomy indicative of thought and resolution, and his forehead, though narrow, was lofty. His eye, deep set in his head, was dark and piercing, and his whole ap-

pearance reminded Sivan of one, to whom little resemblance might have been expected—Father Ludovico. As he drew near, Conrad greeted him kindly. “ Welcome, my brother,” he said; “ my cottage is, as thou seest, somewhat of the smallest at the present time; but there is ever room to receive thee as a guest.”

“ I thank thee,” replied Gaspar shortly; “ I thank thee, my brother, but I come not here, as thou knowest, to exchange courtesies. I have well weighed what passed between thee and me, Conrad Biorno, when we met at Balsille a fortnight ago; and I tell thee, I dare not withhold my witness longer. For thyself, I have ever loved and honoured thee; but though thou hast been my father, yet must I love and honour God and His truth yet more.”

“ God forbid,” interposed Conrad, “ that thou shouldst ever feel otherwise.”

“ It is well,” resumed Gaspar. “ Moved by this feeling, I have come hither to-day, to warn thee that I suffer no wolf to be admitted within the fold of the Lord’s people, though he be clothed in sheepskin. I warn thee that thou dismiss thy dangerous guest here”—he turned to Sivan, to whom he had not vouchsafed the slightest gesture of courtesy—“ who, as thou admittest, confesseth the supremacy of him, who is Antichrist on earth. Wilt thou do this of thine own free will, ere steps be taken to compel thee to it? Persecution from without we cheerfully endure, for that but purifieth the faith; but corruption from within we endure not, for that were to provoke the Lord to remove our candlestick altogether.”

Conrad glanced at Sivan, to see whether he was to make reply; but perceiving that his guest’s

face, though sad, was composed, and that he showed no sign of a disposition to interfere, he turned to Gaspar. " My brother, I would thou couldst be brought to view this matter with different eyes. My guest here obeys an authority which he and his fathers have for centuries acknowledged, and which he deems it would be rebellion for him to cast off, seeing that Scripture alloweth not subjects to sit in judgment on the powers ordained to rule over them. Nor canst thou, in reason and justice, charge on him their errors and offences. I would remind thee also, that though there be many among us who think as thou dost on these subjects, yet such hath never been formally declared to be the faith of our community ; nor is it the faith of the great majority of our brethren. I hold, as thou dost, that the Church of Rome hath in some things corrupted the pure truth of Christ, and in other things hath overlaid it with human inventions, but I do *not* hold, as thou dost, that nought of sound doctrine is left in her, which may avail to the salvation of those of her communion who rest their faith in their Redeemer."

" Faith in their Redeemer!" exclaimed Gaspar hastily. " How can they have faith in their Redeemer, who rely on many mediators, to the dishonour of Him who is the one sole Mediator between God and man ? But I seek not to enter with thee, on the various distortions of, and additions to, the truth, which Rome hath devised—that oft-told tale which thou, as well as I, have again and again recounted. But I ask thee, Conrad Biorno, pastor of the pure Scriptural Church of the Vaudes, art thou resolved to keep in the midst of thine own people, yea in the very bosom of thy family, one who darkens the doctrine of the Sacri-

fice once offered, by the idolatrous fancies of the mass ; who preaches indulgences in place of repentance ; priestly absolution instead of God's forgiveness ; and dilutes the stern truth of Eternal Judgment by the weak admixture of the human doctrine of purgatory ; to sum up all, who teaches that heaven may be attained by all who will do good works, as he would vainly term them, in direct denial of Holy Writ, which unbars the gate of heaven to the elect alone ? ”

“ My brother,” said Conrad, after another glance at Sivan, who still sat unmoved, “ if I feared that the least of these things would come to pass, nought under the canopy of heaven would induce me to subject those over whom I am set, to peril so deadly ! But hear what I urge in reply. No word of controversy hath passed between my guest and any member of my flock or family ; and though he and I have many a time dis-coursed on these things, yet it hath ever been in a spirit of calm inquiry and mutual charity, which hath convinced me that if our opponents greatly misjudge us, yet have we, in not a few things, misjudged them also. And if thou, my brother, wouldest, in the same friendly spirit, join us in our discussions, I doubt not thou wouldest acknowledge such to be the fact. Nor do I, in good sooth, know how men, whose eyes are darkened by error, can ever be brought to a knowledge of purer light—if they, whose understandings have been opened, are to stand aloof from them, and refuse all communion, until they shall not only have renounced the faith wherein alone they have been instructed, but also accepted in its place doctrines which have never been so much as expounded to them.”

"Weakness, weakness, my brother!" exclaimed Beltrami, more vehemently than before. "Thy carnal affection for thy friend leadeth thee astray. Thou art trying to handle pitch, yet escape defilement; to taste of the cup of abominations, yet retain the pure savour of Christian doctrine. Saith not the Scripture, 'Come out of her, that ye be not partakers in her sins;' 'Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you?' But it were vain to argue it further. Thy resolution, as I judge, is taken, and so too is mine. If thou choosest to dally with the evil thing, yet so will not I. I apprise thee that I am even now on my way to the chief pastor of our Church, whom I shall require to summon a convention of all our pastors; that the voice of all may determine whether or not an avowed disciple of the apostate Church shall be permitted to infect the sheep of the Lord's fold, though under the sanction of one of its shepherds? I deemed it right to give thee warning of this, and now I have no desire to tarry longer. Farewell."

With a hasty wave of the hand, he turned to descend the rocky path, and in a few moments had disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER XIX.

In his calm look, where heaven's pure light was shed,
They saw no fear, no recreant symptoms read.
Nor papal curse, nor torture could control
His mind's deep majesty : Faith on his soul
Spread forth her shadowless, her sunny wing,
And from the spoiler plucked the dreaded sting.

BEATTIE.

A LONG silence followed his departure. At length Conrad spoke.

“ My friend, dare I hope that thou hast heard unmoved the words of this upright though misguided man ? Thy large heart that maketh thee so truly the child of thy Father in heaven—can it forgive this honest zeal, though it be not according to judgment ? ”

“ Surely,” answered Sivan readily, “ how can I fail to forgive that which proceedeth not from malice or bitterness, but simply from the narrow view of one who seeth but in part ; and from whose eyes the veil shall one day be taken away ? Think not I am angered at his words. But it grieveth me that I must leave these peaceful retreats, where I have found so faithful a likeness of the simple Church, which the Lord’s Apostles founded of old. In the world without, I find the genuine spirit of the Gospel owned by a few, who shine like lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse

generation ; but for the rest, they openly reject or emptily profess the doctrine of Christ ; or again, if sincere, are possessed by a spirit of distrust and aversion towards their brethren, that makes the pure milk of the Word become to them the very gall of bitterness. But here alone did I deem I had found a whole community, who did indeed obey the injunction of the Apostle, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It grieveth me that I must leave it!"

" And wherefore shouldst thou ? " said Conrad. " Didst thou not hear me tell Beltrami that his dogmas were neither the declared faith of our community, nor held by the greater number of our brotherhood ? Should our spiritual chief ever summon the convention he speaks of, be assured that the general voice would invite thee to remain."

" It may be," said his guest ; " but that convention must never be held. Allowing that the result would be such as thou sayest, it would be too dearly purchased by the recollection that I had introduced strife and disunion among thy people. And thou hast admitted that his sentiments, if not those of the majority, are, at least, shared by many. No. I have but to pray thee that thou despatch thy son—who, I see, is now returning hither—that thou despatch him after Beltrami with a message to the effect, that even ere it reaches him, Leonardo di Sivori will have quitted the country of the Valdesi, and purposes not to return thither. Nay, my host," he added, " it is vain for thee to remonstrate. My purpose is fixed ; and if thou wilt not grant my request, I must myself undertake the office, which I would fain delegate to another."

The other two members of the family, who had by this time rejoined them, and who were warmly attached to Sivan, united their entreaties to those of Conrad, but in vain. At last, perceiving that his resolution was inflexible, Arnold yielded to the representations of their guest, that if he intended to undertake the commission at all, he must do so without delay, or the evil he wished to avert, would already have taken place. With many a warm grasp of the hand, therefore, and assurance of regard, he departed on his errand. A yet more sorrowful parting ensued between Sivan and his remaining friends, until the former tore himself away, and furnished with a wallet containing provisions, and an iron-shod staff, such as was generally used by the mountaineers, descended the rocky path, and took the road which led to Pignerol.

He paused for a few moments on the highest point of the path; from which the entire village of which Conrad was the pastor, might clearly be discerned by the light of the newly-risen moon. He looked wistfully on the picturesque array of rustic chalets; some perched on level spots, along the slope of the mountain-side, others collected in a group in the valley, with the homely little church in its centre. He called to mind the ministrations of Conrad among the inhabitants, in which he had so often accompanied him; he thought on the earnest, single-hearted devotion of the shepherd, and the affectionate reverence with which his flock repaid his labours; he dwelt on the Apostolic purity of their doctrine, the primitive simplicity of their discipline, the unadorned beauty of their ritual. If those fathers of the early Church,

among whom he had dwelt at Pella, could be restored again to life, would they not recognize in this community the genuine likeness of the original they had themselves set up ? He thought also on the blamelessness of their lives and habits, their manly spirit of independence, their hospitality, their guilelessness, their charity—those genuine fruits whereby the truth of their religion might be tested. How peaceful, how lovely, all appeared ! The world, with its guilty strife, its clashing creeds, and its restless passions, seemed to be shut out by the barriers wherewith nature had girded round this favoured land ; and man's primal state of healthful labour, innocent enjoyment, and simple worship, to be restored to him. Yet even here, he sadly reflected, bitterness and disunion had intruded themselves ; and brothers looked upon brothers with a jealous and distrustful eye. He remembered his promise to Father Justin. "Ah, my father," he soliloquized, "thou little knowest how hard to keep is the promise I made thee ! But I will at least see thee and Luigi once more. While ye yet live, I owe ye the duties of a son and a brother, and I will not fail in them. But should ye be taken away—enough, I will wait till then."

He turned away, and walked rapidly on. The country was familiar to him ; and he knew the moon would not set for several hours. Long ere then he would have reached a deserted chalet, at the distance of a few miles, where he proposed to pass the night. The first part of his journey passed prosperously enough ; but as he proceeded, clouds began to rise which sometimes partially, and sometimes entirely, obscured the moonlight, obliging him to walk slowly

and with the utmost caution. At last he arrived at the hut; and, unstrapping his wallet, was about to enter; when a figure, wearing, so far as Sivan could discern by the imperfect light, the dress of a soldier, sprang through the open doorway, and commanded him to keep his distance and declare who he was.

Sivan stepped back a few paces, and grasped his staff; while the stranger drew a sword from beneath his cloak, and also stood on his defence. A few rapid questions followed. The two still faced each other with mutual distrust; when suddenly the moon, bursting out from behind the cloud that had hitherto concealed her, revealed the faces of the travellers in a light, broad and clear as that of day. A cry of astonishment broke from them both; and their uplifted weapons dropped from their hands. "Luigi! Leonardo!" they exclaimed; and the next instant the brothers were locked in each other's embrace.

When the first emotions of surprise had subsided, Sivan began eagerly to question his brother as to the circumstances that had brought him, at such an hour, and in so strange a guise, to that solitary spot.

"I was seeking thee, my Leonardo," was the reply, "and praise be to Heaven, have found thee in time to prevent evil from befalling thee. Did we not promise each other, when we parted at Florence, that whosoever either of us should be released from the bonds of present duty," he sighed as he spoke, "so as to be at liberty to seek the other, he should do so without delay? Thou hast not forgotten, my Leonardo?"

"No," answered his brother, "I have not, for I was even now on my way to seek thee. But thou impliest that thy duties at Florence are ended. That sigh,

too ! It cannot be that thy master—that Father Girolamo is no more ?”

Luigi turned away his head. “It is so,” he said ; “I am a second time an orphan !”

“And how ?” exclaimed his questioner. “By disease, or accident, or how ? Died he suddenly, or after timely warning ? Doubtless, in any case, honoured and mourned by all in Florence ?”

“Honoured and mourned !—disease, accident !” cried Luigi bitterly. “He died the death of the vilest malefactor in the market-place of Florence ; his last moments embittered by the presence of deadly enemies rejoicing at his downfall ; his death agonies rendered doubly agonizing by the execrations of the multitude that beheld them !”

“The multitude !” cried Sivan in amazement, “the multitude of Florence that followed him, for so many years, as sheep their shepherd ; that hung on his words as though he had been a God rather than a man, —they to consent to, nay, exult over, his violent death ! Luigi, thou art distraught.”

“I would I were,” replied he. “Sit thee here, Leonardo, on this rough bench, whereon I was reposing, and hearken to the tale. Thou heardest at Turin of the righteous severity wherewith my sainted father caused the lawless associates of Piero de’ Medici to be punished, when they sought to introduce bloodshed and anarchy into Florence. Their accomplices, not daring openly to assail him, instigated our bitter enemies, the Franciscans, to denounce him from their pulpits, and try to rouse the fury of the multitude against him as an impostor. He bore their invectives with a calm disdain, that at once baffled and enraged

them. Nor did the populace pay heed to the vile calumnies they disseminated ; until, in an evil hour, our brother Domenico da Pescia, whose zeal ever outstripped his judgment, offered to prove the truth of Father Girolamo's mission and prophetic powers by the ordeal of fire. He proposed that a large pile of wood should be kindled in the market-place ; that he and Giuliano Rondinelli, who had made himself most conspicuous by his denouncement of Savonarola, should enter the flames together ; and whichever should issue forth unhurt, should be declared the champion of the truth."

"A rash proposal," observed Sivan, "though a brave one. Did Father Rondinelli accept it?"

"He did," said Luigi; "and, notwithstanding Father Girolamo's dislike to the measure, the day of trial was fixed. The people, who ever delight in any thing strange and novel, were full of eagerness to witness it. Father Girolamo knew not how to act. He regarded the contest as a presumptuous invocation to the Deity to interfere in a matter which warranted not so solemn an appeal : nor could he hope that a blessing would follow such an attempt. On the other hand, he felt that to decline the trial, would lend a colour to the calumnies already circulated by his enemies, that he distrusted the righteousness of his cause. After much deliberation and doubt, he proposed, when the day arrived, that Domenico should enter the flames, bearing the consecrated Host in his right hand."

"The consecrated Host!" exclaimed Sivan. "The Body of the Lord Himself to be carried into the flames, and for such a purpose ! This was surely a

more unhappy mistake than the first. That was but rash and presumptuous. This appears to me to be profane, and well nigh blasphemous. What fatal illusion obscured the prior's judgment, that he made such a proposal?"

"I know not," was the reply. "It may have been that he hoped thus to open their eyes to the presumptuous character of the whole proceeding: it may be that he feared Domenico's constancy would fail, and hoped the Divine Presence would sustain him. Doubtless it was a grievous error: yet who could marvel if the balance of judgment were not preserved in the midst of such peril and confusion? But the proposition was instantly seized upon by Savonarola's enemies, and wrested with ingenious and merciless severity against him. It was denounced at once as sacrilegious impiety that sought wantonly to insult the Most High, and as proof of imposture that dared not face the appointed test. The fickle multitude, always easily swayed for the moment to the side of persecution, caught up the cry. They demanded that Father Girolamo's proposal should be rejected as blasphemy, and bade Domenico at once proceed to fulfil the engagement he had undertaken. On his refusal their fury broke out into open violence, and it was with difficulty that Savonarola and his friends escaped from their hands. That night the convent of San Marco was assailed by a band of lawless ruffians, who burst open the gates, and forced their way to Father Girolamo's chamber—"

"The traitors!" ejaculated Sivan. "And did he then die by their hands?"

"His enemies were not so merciful," rejoined the

narrator, "as to put him to an immediate death. He was cast into a dungeon, and tortured again and again with fire and rack, in the hope of extorting from his lips an avowal that his mission was a delusion and himself an impostor. Six times was his frame wrung with intolerable agonies—each time with more inhuman cruelty than before ! but in vain : his constancy remained unshaken throughout. At length, the seventh time—merciful Heaven, shall I ever forget that scene, for they forced me to be present ?"

He paused in great emotion, and his companion could see by the uncertain light that he wrapped his cloak round his face, as though he were endeavouring to shut out some frightful spectacle that forced itself upon his vision. He sat thus for several minutes ; and it was with difficulty that he mastered his emotion sufficiently to allow him to proceed. When he did resume his narrative, it was in the same excited tone as before.

" No ! I shall never forget it. It was a sight such as I think no human eye hath ever before seen the like of ! His manly form was mangled and blackened with their horrible engines ; his noble features, ghastly as those of a corpse, were convulsed with unutterable suffering ; yet his lips were firmly compressed in token of unconquered firmness, or only moved in prayer for himself and his tormentors. It might have melted the demons of the pit itself to mercy ! But they who sat by were steeled by their evil passions against all softer feeling ; and they commanded that he should be stretched for the seventh time on the rack, and the heated irons applied with greater severity than heretofore. As they grasped his swollen wrists and ankles

to secure them in the iron sockets, nature gave way under the unendurable torture. He shrieked aloud; his brain grew delirious with pain, and he uttered a few incoherent and ambiguous words, which they instantly caught up; and, declaring them to amount to a confession of guilt, condemned him, on their evidence, to be first strangled and then burnt, as an impostor and blasphemer, in the public market-place. Yes, these men dared, in face of Heaven, pronounce that sentence on the strength of a few imperfectly-heard expressions, forced from his agonized lips during the wanderings of a mind unhinged by suffering, under which men of a less powerful frame would inevitably have expired!"

"My poor Luigi," said Sivan compassionately: "and didst thou witness his death as well as his torture?"

"I did," said Luigi, in a calmer tone; "and I can speak of that with more composure; for that day set him free from his trials, and consummated his victory over man's malice and cruelty. It was nearly a month after his last examination ere he had recovered sufficient strength to allow of his being carried out to execution. During that interval I was constantly with him; and none know as I do how tranquil and patient he was. As soon as he heard of the confession that had been attributed to him, he instantly and unequivocally declared that he had never meant to say what he was reported to have said; and if he had used the words, it could only have been during the aberrations of partial delirium. He received all who visited him; but rejected the overtures which were liberally made him by his adversaries. I was

myself present when an offer from the Pope himself was conveyed to him, promising him not only a full pardon and absolution for all offences against the Holy See, but the prospect of honour and advancement ; if he would but consent to acknowledge publicly that he had maligned his Holiness, and misled the people of Florence. At last, finding there was no hope of subduing his resolution, and his strength being partially restored, they put their unrighteous sentence into execution. Father Domenico and another friar of the same convent were led out to be burned with him."

"Luigi," said Sivan, after a moment's reflection, "dost thou remember our conversation with Father Girolamo on the banks of the Arno the very evening, as I think, of my departure from Florence ? Methinks I can see him now with his flashing eye, and uplifted hand, and that look that seemed to penetrate far into futurity ! He told us it had been revealed to him that his death should be by violence, and in the presence of an angry multitude ; but, unless my memory fails me, he foretold it would be by crucifixion, not by fire."

"He did so, my Leonardo ; his words rushed back on my recollection on that fatal day when they were fully verified. In order to make a show for the brutal populace, they ordered that Savonarola and his two brethren in martyrdom should be hanged up on high until life was extinct, and after that their bodies cast into the flames. They planted a high post in the centre of the market-place, to which they fastened a transverse beam a few feet from its top. From the two ends of the cross piece they suspended the two

inferior objects of their vengeance, and in the centre Father Girolamo, with his outstretched arms, bound to the horizontal limb. So closely did the scene resemble that enacted more than fourteen centuries ago on the hill of Calvary, that they could not but themselves perceive it, and endeavoured by shortening the extremities of the transverse piece to remove the impression it conveyed; but the attempt was vain. The blasphemies of the multitude, the mockings of the savage soldiery, the gratified malice of the deadly enemies, who looked on from afar, the few faithful friends who wept beneath the fatal tree, the death struggles of the sufferers on either side, and the central figure so calm, so resigned, so compassionate amid its agonies—man's utmost ingenuity could not destroy the likeness."

"I remained," resumed Luigi, after another pause, "until I had seen the dust that had once been animated by the spirit of Girolamo di Savonarola, deposited in a quiet grave, and then I turned my back on Florence for ever; for there is no one within the circuit of its walls whom I care to behold again."

"Nay, not so," interposed Sivan; "thy grief, my Luigi, hath made thee forget that there is still one in that city, to whom both thou and I owe such grateful duty as children should render to the most affectionate of fathers. And to whom shouldst thou go for consolation when thou needest it, save to him who hath been a parent to us from our cradles—Father Justin?"

"Father Justin!" exclaimed Luigi, starting. "Forgive me! My sorrow doth, indeed, make me forgetful! Alas! Leonardo, how shall I tell thee?"

"What mean you?" asked Sivan, in great agitation; "hath aught befallen him also? Speak, I pray you, my brother, and, at least, relieve my suspense!"

"It is too true, dear Leonardo. I forgot that thou hadst received no tidings from our native city for many months. It was in the depth of the past winter that we laid our father in his peaceful resting-place."

"So long since?" said Sivan. "That, too, is strange. I had heard of his well-being just before the disputation, and winter was even then approaching. His death must have been sudden."

"Ask not concerning it," said his brother, turning his head away. "His end was peace. Let that suffice thee."

"Nay," urged Sivan; "but wherefore this reserve? Surely, if his decay was calm and gradual, as thy words imply, there can be nought that it would pain mine ear to hear. Wert thou with him at the last?"

"I was," answered the other, in the same constrained tone as before.

"And he died painlessly and happily, as I understand thee? Let me hear his dying words. He forgot not his favourite pupil, his adopted son? Was there no message, no token of love, to Leonardo di Sivori?"

"Again, I pray thee, ask not," answered Luigi. "Consider, thou wert far away among the mountain homes of the Valdesi. How should a message reach thee?"

"Ha! I begin to comprehend," said Sivan, upon

whom a light broke suddenly. "He had heard of my flight from Turin with Conrad Biorno; was it not so?"

"Yes," replied Luigi reluctantly. "He heard that thou hadst cast off thine allegiance to holy Church, and the faith wherein thou hadst been baptized and nurtured, to league thyself with rebels and heretics."

"And he believed it," cried Sivan passionately; "and the sorrow thereof brought down his grey hairs to the grave."

"No," answered his brother; "it was not so bad as that. Let it comfort thee, my Leonardo, he believed it not. But a few days after thine escape, Father Ludovico passed through Florence, travelling with the utmost speed to Rome; whither he was journeying, in order to require fresh powers for dealing more sternly than heretofore, with the malignant heretics of the mountains of Piedmont. He delayed just long enough in Florence, to enable him to visit Father Justin; and it was no pleasing interview to either party. Ludovico reproached the prior with what he termed the treachery and falsehood of his favourite pupil, and warned him, with cruel exultation, that thou and thy brother heretic—such were his words—were already doomed to the stake, if ye should again fall into the hands of the Holy Office."

"And Father Justin?" asked Sivan.

"Father Justin answered indignantly, offering to be guarantee for thee, that thou hadst not abjured thy faith, and that thy tenderness of heart alone had induced thee to ruin thyself, to save a criminal from the penalty of death. He reminded Father Ludovico that he had warned him in the first instance, that thou

wert not fitted for the office he designed thee, and that his inflexible determination alone had imposed it on thee. It was Ludovico's own rashness, therefore, that had chiefly caused the disaster. Angry words ensued, and the Nuncio departed to Rome with malice in his heart. But a brief interval elapsed, ere he once more returned, bringing with him a sentence of deprivation against Father Justin, whom he had contrived to connect by some ingenious device with thy flight from Turin. The old man could not bear the shock of his removal from the duties and scenes which had become a part of his very life. He drooped and died in the course of a few weeks."

"And he spoke of me with his dying breath? I feel sure he did. Tell me, I implore you, what he said."

"I will tell thee," said Luigi. "Thou hast heard the worst; and what remains will comfort, rather than grieve thee. 'Tell Leonardo di Sivori,' he said, 'that I die with unshaken confidence that his faith in the Redeemer, and his obedience to holy Church, are firm as ever. Nor will it be long ere he and I shall meet again.' Such were his words. And now, my brother, there is instant need that thou determine what course it is best for thee to pursue in thy present peril. Thou canst not return to Florence, or in sooth to any part of Italy; for sentence of death hath, as thou hast heard, been already pronounced against thee. Nor canst thou, with safety, continue in thy present retreat. Even now, an armed force, headed by one Ulric von Happenburgh, is on its way hither. He hath learned, as I hear, that thou wert the guest of a certain Arnold Biorno, against whom, for some reason

of his own, he nourishes a deadly hatred. He willingly, therefore, undertook the task of seeking thee out, and bringing thee, together with the family that had sheltered thee, alive or dead, to Turin. Yesterday, in this disguise, I accompanied them as far as Pignerol, where they bivouacked for the night, and on their arrival in that city, contrived to effect my escape, and anticipate their arrival here, though only by a few hours."

Sivan rose instantly. "We must warn Conrad Biorno," he said, "without a moment's delay, that he and his family may fly for shelter to their fastnesses among the higher passes of the mountains. When that is done, thou and I, Luigi, will deliberate whether we shall bend our steps; or rather thou shalt determine the matter for me. I would not return to Florence, even if it were in my power; and thou hast rightly said that I may not any longer continue in my present place of refuge. Thou art the sole tie that I now have to life. Thy wish shall guide me."

"I have already considered the matter," was Luigi's reply. "I am as weary, as I doubt not thou art, of a land where all that is pure and noble is hunted out of life, and nothing flourishes but falsehood and wrong. Let us leave Italy, nay, Europe, altogether. Thou mayest, perhaps, have heard—for the rumour was rife last autumn in all the chief Italian cities—that not a few islands only, as was at first believed, but vast continents, have been brought to light by Cabot the Venetian, in the far bosom of the western waters. There man is still almost in his primal state of simplicity and innocence. Let us go thither, my brother. We have money sufficient to procure us a passage in

any of the numerous expeditions which are now preparing to sail to those untrodden shores—untrodden, that is, by all save the untutored children of nature. There, haply, in the bosom of a primitive and simple-hearted people, we may find the peace that civilized and Christian Europe denieth to her inhabitants."

"Be it as thou wilt," said Sivan. "I care not, as I have already said, whither thou dost direct our steps. But we have a journey of several hours before us. We must set out immediately, or we may be too late to warn Conrad of the peril that is hanging over his head, and the heads of those whom he accounts dearer than himself."

CHAPTER XX.

Then the mountain echoes rang,
With the clangour of alarms.
Shrill the signal trumpet sang,
All our warriors leaped to arms.

* * * * *

Virtue, valour, nought availed
With so merciless a foe,
When the nerves of heroes failed,
Cowards then could strike a blow.
Cold and keen the assassins' blade
Smote the father to the ground,
Through the infant's breast conveyed
To the mother's heart a wound.

MONTGOMERY.

WHEN the brothers emerged from the hut, they found that the moon had already set, and the clouds which had long been gathering had overspread the greater part of the sky, so that they had to grope their way in almost total darkness. Had less important interests been at stake, Sivan would have postponed their journey until daybreak; but he knew that the delay even of a few minutes might make the difference of life or death to Conrad and his family. He proceeded, therefore, as rapidly as he dared under the circumstances to do, noting as well as he was able, the various landmarks which he had passed on his journey

a few hours before. But the clouds continued to gather as the night advanced, and at last the darkness became so dense, that it was impossible to discern objects even at the distance of a few feet. They could only proceed by feeling their way along the rocky path, which fortunately for them, at that particular point, ran along the bottom of a narrow ravine. Presently signs of an approaching storm began to manifest themselves. Large drops of rain fell at intervals, and the wind, which had hitherto howled fiercely among the gorges of the mountain, suddenly lulled. A few minutes afterwards the elements burst forth into all the fury of an Alpine tempest. The first flash of lightning showed Sivan and his companion that they had missed the right road, and wandered to some spot in the hills which was quite unknown to him. It was impossible to attempt to retrace their steps without the utmost danger, not only to life and limb, but of wandering yet further from the path which they wished to regain. To complete their discomfiture, the rain began to descend in cataracts, threatening them with a new danger from the swelling of some mountain stream, which might rush into the ravine they were now traversing, and carry them away like autumn leaves before the sweep of its waters. Their only resource was to take refuge in a hollow formed by a projecting rock, sufficiently elevated above the pathway to secure them from danger, and there await the cessation of the hurricane.

The scene they beheld from their place of shelter was inconceivably grand and terrible. The sky was now black as ink, now bright with lurid flame; revealing for a moment the jagged peaks of the mountains

in strong relief, and then sinking again into total darkness. The bursts of thunder—mingled with the roar of the avalanches, and here and there with the crash of fragments of rock, dislodged by the concussion, and falling into the abyss beneath them—woke a thousand echoes, which reverberated far off among the cliffs ; rendering the din as incessant as it was overpowering. Occasionally a blast of wind would sweep up the ravine with terrific fury, uprooting the pine-trees as it rushed past ; and dying off into the distance in shrieks and howls, as though the evil spirits had broken loose from their bondage, and were revealing the secrets of their place of torment. Luigi, to whom the scene was wholly new, was at once awe-struck and terrified by the conflict of the elements, and was with difficulty composed by Sivan's assurances that there was little fear of injury befalling them, and that in an hour or two at latest, the tempest would have spent its fury.

It was daybreak, nevertheless, ere this prediction was fulfilled, and then the early glimmer of morning showed Sivan that he had not been mistaken in the conjecture he had formed during the storm. The ravine in which he found himself, not only lay out of the direct route to Biorno's chalet, but was one which he had never visited before. They instantly set about endeavouring to recover the lost track, but for a long time without success. Sivan's knowledge of the country, it should be remarked, was necessarily very limited, being only derived from the expeditions he had made with Arnold, or Ernest, in the early spring of that year. It was, therefore, little wonder that they soon found themselves involved in inextricable difficulties : the paths they pursued sometimes ending

abruptly on the verge of a precipice, sometimes winding back, by circuitous routes, to the same point from which they had set out. Nearly two hours passed in this manner. The morning sun was visible above the lower ranges of the mountains, and they had not yet discovered the track they sought for. Sivan chafed inwardly at the delay. Every moment was, as he knew, fraught with the most deadly peril to the friends that had sheltered him ; and should a few more hours elapse, before he could succeed in reaching them, his warning would come too late. Suddenly it occurred to him that the path by which he had approached the cave, where they found refuge, might have been broken away during the tempest of the previous night, by the fall of some portion of the cliff along which it had wound ; and this conjecture was confirmed by discovering that such a fall had taken place within a few hundred yards of their place of shelter. The only hope now of recovering the lost path was to scale some point of elevation, from which the principal features of the surrounding country might be discerned ; and thus they might be enabled to learn at least the direction in which they desired to proceed. By the help of his iron-shod pole, and with Luigi's assistance, Sivan contrived to reach the roots of a large pine-tree ; and from its upper boughs to swing himself on to a projecting crag ; whose ragged top, standing entirely clear of its neighbours, commanded an uninterrupted view of the adjoining landscape. From this point, he at once descried the road he was in search of, and perceived also that by descending on the other side of the crag, and making a slight detour through the rocks, he could recover it at the distance of a few hundred yards.

But another spectacle broke upon him at the same moment, which filled him with grief and apprehension. As far as his eye could reach, the pass was thronged with soldiers, whose banners and accoutrements were but too well known to him ; advancing silently but rapidly in the direction of Biorno's dwelling. As they mounted an ascent, almost immediately in front of the eminence where he was stationed, he caught sight of the figure of Ulric von Happenburgh, who was manifestly directing their movements. Descending from the crag he apprised Luigi of what he had seen, and proposed that they should follow the track of the soldiers, and endeavour if possible to pass them by some by-path, so that they might yet reach the doomed village in time to give the alarm. Luigi assented. They again mounted the crag and watched the movements of the enemy, as file after file passed by them until they had numbered at least four hundred men. At length the rear-guard appeared, and no sooner had that also vanished into the distance, than the two adventurers commenced cautiously following on their track.

They made several attempts to execute their purpose ; but the great speed with which Ulric pushed his men forward, and the care he took to send scouts to examine every path they approached, frustrated all their efforts. They were still, therefore, in the rear of the column, when about two hours before noon, the men-at-arms arrived near the brow of the eminence, at the foot of which lay the village where Sivan had so long been sheltered ; with the chalet of its pastor, at a little distance on the face of the precipice beyond. Here Sivan and Luigi, from the spot where they were stand-

ing, could see them halt, and the greater part, by order of Von Happenburgh, concealed themselves in a ravine which lay close at hand; while about fifty of their number struck off to the right, and entered a path that ran along by the side of the mountain which formed the southern rampart of the valley.

Sivan at a glance divined their object, which was to secure the upper end of the path lying immediately above the pastor's cottage. His heart sank within him. It was clear that all the preparations had been made, with a full knowledge, not only of the country, but of the habits of the peasants, which rendered the escape of the unfortunate victims almost impossible. The hour had been selected, at which the inhabitants would be within doors, engaged in the chief meal of the day, nor could one of them, at that moment, be seen moving any where abroad. He watched the ambuscade as it crept silently, man by man, along the narrow ridge, screened from view by the natural parapet of rock and the climbing shrubs. Oh! for the wings of a bird to reach the village and warn them of the impending danger. Oh! that some casual passer-by would but perceive them and raise a warning cry ere it should be too late. Every minute that passed by diminished the chance of deliverance; and Sivan's heart sickened as he saw the head of the ambuscade reach the point which they had been sent to secure.

"Merciful Heaven," he exclaimed, clasping his hands, "protect and save them, for nought else can deliver them now!"

As he spoke a scarf was for a moment waved in the air, a preconcerted signal, doubtless, to denote that the ambuscade had reached its appointed station.

At the same moment Ulric's troops descended from their place of concealment, shouting the war-cries of their various leaders, and filling the valley with noise and tumult, that contrasted strangely with its late quiet. The villagers rushed in confusion from their chalets; the men grasping the weapons they had hastily caught up, the women heightening the disorder of the scene by their screams of terror. But though taken at so fearful a disadvantage, the Valdesi did no discredit to the character of indomitable courage which they had earned in the wars with their oppressors. They drew together in front of the path which lay on the opposite side of the valley to that by which the invaders had entered, and standing shoulder to shoulder, with their long halberds projecting four feet before them, formed an impenetrable wall to protect the retreat of the women and children to a place of safety in the mountains. They retired slowly before the enemy, presenting still an unbroken front, which the others vainly endeavoured to pierce; and doubtless they would have succeeded in their manœuvre, had it not been for the party which Ulric had planted at the upper end of the pass. But as the crowd of fugitives, having passed Conrad's chalet, reached the point in question, they found it strongly blockaded by the enemy.

A scene ensued so dreadful, that Sivan turned away his eyes, unable to endure the horror of the spectacle; and Luigi, turning deadly pale, leaned against the rock behind him for support. The throng, consisting chiefly of women and children, recoiling from the swords that flashed directly in their faces, fell back upon those below them, who were pressing

with frantic eagerness up the ascent. The narrow path and platform in front of the pastor's cottage became in a moment a mass of fearful confusion ; while the men-at-arms following them down the descent, stabbed and hewed in all directions round them without pause or mercy. The crowd below, perceiving that their retreat was cut off, lost all order, and fled in every possible direction through the valley ; pursued by their assailants, who emulated the barbarity of their comrades above,—striking down all alike, old and young, armed man and defenceless woman, with a relentless cruelty which it would be impossible to credit, were it not that the reality of such scenes has been only too often and too surely attested. The whole valley, the quiet scene of Conrad's ministrations, the home of innocence and peaceful happiness, re-echoed to the groans of the wounded, the ferocious shouts of the soldiers, and the screams of women, to whom every form of outrage and brutality was offered.

At length Sivan compelled himself to look again. His eye traversed every part of the dreadful scene, but, to his surprise, he could no where perceive the pastor, or any of his family. "Strange!" he muttered. "Arnold, doubtless, had not returned from doing my errand ; and Ernest would not have arrived by the time at which the attack commenced ; but how to account for the absence of the others I know not. Can it be possible that they have escaped ? Nor can I see any where the prime mover of this hellish work. Tell me, Luigi, can you any where perceive Von Happenburgh ?"

"The monster!" cried Luigi, whose passionate

nature was all on fire, "I saw him a few minutes since!" I beheld him strike down a woman, with an infant clinging to her breast, who was trying to escape him. By Heaven! let me but have the chance, and I will avenge on his head the murders that have been wrought to-day! See, there he is," he added, a moment afterwards. "That is he, if I mistake not, just coming out of the door of that cottage, on the high shelf of rock yonder."

"Conrad's cottage!" exclaimed Sivan, with a gesture of despair. "Great heavens! they have fallen into the hands of this savage, and been butchered like the rest! O righteous Lord! how long wilt Thou bear with the creatures of thy hand?"

"Nay," said Luigi, "that is not likely. The chief object of this expedition was, as I told you, to get yourself and Conrad, the two fugitives who had been sentenced to the stake, into the hands of the Inquisition: they have, doubtless, orders to convey him uninjured to Turin."

"You are right, Luigi," rejoined Sivan; "Ulric is placing sentinels at the cottage door. Doubtless he is a prisoner within. Oh, that it were possible to do aught to aid him!"

"Would it not be possible," said Luigi, "to rouse some of the neighbouring villages in time to intercept the soldiers at one of the passes on their return? They might not only deliver thy friend, but take vengeance for the cruelties that have been wrought to-day."

"Alas! no," said Sivan; "I have thought of that long since; but the nearest village is too distant to allow of such a hope, and the fugitives from this

scene of blood will have reached it and spread the alarm, long ere thou and I could do it. Besides, we saw that they had left parties to guard all the more dangerous points, as they passed this morning. Nor will they linger here long enough, to run the chance of retribution at the hands of those whose countrymen they have murdered. See, even now they are recalling the stragglers! Doubtless, they will resume their route homeward without a moment's needless delay. We must move from this spot, or they will discover us."

As he spoke, Ulric's trumpets sounded a recall; and the men-at-arms began slowly to return, covered with blood, and laden with such valuables as the slender purses and simple chalets of the villagers could supply. Sivan and Luigi descended from their place of shelter, and creeping cautiously under cover of the wood, gained the path by which the ambuscade had advanced to occupy the upper pass. From thence they looked on while the troops were again arrayed in marching order. Conrad was brought forth, secured between two soldiers, and placed in the centre of the detachment; and the whole body began to move up the pass by which they had descended but an hour before.

Sivan watched them as they slowly receded from sight; but he noted with great surprise that Von Happenburgh did not accompany their departure, but continued to linger among the smoking ruins of the village; nor were the sentinels withdrawn from the door of Biorno's cottage. A few minutes afterwards they perceived the German mount the path that led to the chalet, and dismiss the soldiers; who moved

slowly off to follow their comrades. As they departed he entered the cottage ; and a minute or two afterwards a woman's scream was heard, and Margherita rushed forth, closely pursued by Ulric. The ruffian's features were inflamed at once with the brutal passions, which a scene such as that he had just passed through would naturally provoke, and by fury at the repulse he had received. It was plain that he was prepared for the worst violence, and remarked with fell satisfaction that all retreat was cut off from his victim ; for the soldiers who, on hearing her scream, had turned to behold what was passing, secured the lower end of the pathway ; and he himself interposed between her and the higher ascent. He laughed hideously as he saw the look of despair which came over her features as she saw the impossibility of evading his pursuit.

"What, ho ! my coy beauty!" he exclaimed, "didst thou think that thou alone of all this nest of heretics and traitors, wert to be permitted to come off scot-free—thou, the grandchild of Conrad Biorno, the arch-traitor, and high priest of heresy—thou, the daughter of my deadliest foe ? Ho ! ho ! I promise thee if thou hast been left to the last, it hath only been in order that the last morsel of revenge might be the sweetest!"

"Thy revenge!" exclaimed Margherita. "Arnold Biorno thy foe ! When did he ever injure thee or thine, that thou utterest threats so fearful ?"

"Ha ! hast thou forgotten, then ?" rejoined Von Happenburgh. "Hast thou forgotten the stranger who was an inmate of thy father's cottage some ten years ago, after the fatal day of Pommières ? Thou wert,

I remember, scarce twelve years of age then, yet thou canst scarce have forgotten him. See here," he pursued, pointing to the socket of his sightless eye, "that was thy father's work! He hath, by some infernal chance, escaped my hands this time, but thou hast not; and when he returns to his home this evening, he will scarce rejoice over his good fortune, when he hears from thy lips the fate that hath befallen thee. By all the fiends, he shall wish that his arm had withered to the shoulder-joint, ere he discharged that accursed arrow!"

The mention of her father's name increased the maiden's despair. "Mercy, mercy!" she cried, falling on her knees before him; "thou knowest it was no malice that prompted that deed; that it was done in fair fight. And hast thou forgotten how thou wast tended and cared for, and dismissed in safety and honour? And what can it avail thee to injure me? Oh, spare me this wrong! and there is no ransom that my father will not pay thee,—no service that my Ernest will not essay in thy behalf."

"Forgotten!" exclaimed the German with a fierce laugh. "I have forgotten every thing but my revenge! Ransom! sayest thou; what, from the hoards of a ruined peasant! Thy Ernest, too; he is thy lover, I suppose. A welcome bride shall he find to greet him when next he visits thee! But why do I palter thus? The troops are already far advanced in their retreat; and it will be perilous for me to linger here."

He wound his arms round her as he spoke. With the strength of despair she wrenched herself free; and, rushing by him, endeavoured to gain the upper ascent: but in an instant he had seized her in his powerful

grasp, and was dragging her towards the hut. Hitherto Sivan and Luigi, though they had now reached the spot where the ambuscade had been stationed, had remained inactive, imperfectly comprehending what was passing; but, on beholding this spectacle, they hurried down to her rescue. The more active and impetuous Luigi was first, grasping his drawn sword in his hand; but, short as was the distance he had to traverse, his assistance came too late. The maiden had again broken from Von Happenburgh's hold, casting her eyes wildly around her as if in hope that some unexpected mode of escape would be open to her. She looked with a despairing glance on the beetling precipice above, and the dark pool that lay five hundred feet beneath, and from these to the ruffian, more pitiless than either, who was again advancing to seize her. She looked upwards to the sky, and a sudden light rushed into her eyes. Her hands were for a moment upraised to heaven in supplication; and then, with a single bound, she sprang from the rocky platform into the fearful gulf beneath.

Von Happenburgh started back. Awe and amazement at a deed so daring, from one who had seemed so tender and timid, overpowered, for the moment, the fiercer passions by which he had been agitated. With eyes, which he strove in vain to withdraw from the spectacle, he watched the headlong descent, and the disappearance of the body in the sullen pool below: but he looked in vain for it to rise again to the surface. So fearful was the height from which she had leaped, that life must have been extinct long ere she reached the water: but whether the force of the descent had plunged the body too deep in the sand to allow of its

again becoming extricated, or whether some under-current had driven it into a hollow of the rocks beneath the level of the lake, could not be ascertained. But no trace was ever afterwards discovered of the high-souled and beautiful Margherita!

Ulric stood for one moment rooted to the spot ; but the next Luigi rushed upon him. "Villain!" he shouted, " murdering villain, turn, and meet the death thou hast merited."

The presence of immediate danger restored Von Happenburgh's hardihood. He endeavoured to draw his sword, but it was not in his scabbard, and he remembered that he had laid it aside, a minute before, inside the chalet. Thither he instantly rushed, pursued by Luigi ; and the next minute the clash of steel was heard as of men engaged in a deadly conflict. Sivan hastened at his utmost speed to his brother's rescue ; and the soldiers, who had been watching what was passing from below, began also hastily to remount the pathway. But before either party could enter the hut the conflict was already over. Pierced through the joints of his armour by a mortal stab from Luigi, Ulric had collected his vast strength, and with a final blow had cleft the helmet of his antagonist sheer in twain. They had both fallen and expired at the same time.

Sivan stood like one in a trance as he witnessed the succession of horrors. Without resistance, and almost without consciousness, he suffered the soldiers to bind his arms, and lead him away in their custody : nor had he fully recovered from the shock he had sustained, before he found himself once more in Turin, a prisoner in the fatal dungeons of the Inquisition.

CHAPTER XXI.

I have lived to learn how hollow
Are the hopes that I believed.
Oft my willing faith I yielded,
And as oft have been deceived !
Like the mirage of the desert
When the pilgrim's foot draws near,
I have seen the cooling waters
Into vapour disappear.
Lo, again the golden visions !
I would fain believe them true,
But my sleep was rudely broken,
And I may not dream anew !

OLD BALLAD.

SIVAN had not been many hours in the prison, before he was visited by Father Hugo, a Dominican monk, with whom he had become slightly acquainted during his former brief stay in Turin. He was a man of a sincere, but stern and gloomy turn of mind; and had probably been selected on that account to prepare the prisoners for death; as it was the policy of Father Ludovico to shake as much as possible the firmness of their resolution.

He greeted Sivan with a look in which stern reproach was blended with sorrow. "Unhappy man!" he said; "it avails not to tell thee how deeply thy pre-

sent condition moveth my compassion. Thou, so lately the honoured and successful champion of the Church, to be counted among the very enemies whom thou didst thyself discomfit! Hath much learning made thee mad, that thou hast thyself closed the eyes that could see the truth so plainly, and voluntarily chosen falsehood in its stead?"

"Content thee, my brother," answered Sivan. "What I did, I did not inconsiderately. My hope and my faith are the same that they have ever been; nor have I renounced my allegiance to holy Church, as thou dost believe. I strove to save from torture and death, one whom I held to be suffering unjustly for conscience' sake, and refused to be a participator in his unrighteous condemnation. The consequences of my act I am prepared to abide; nor can aught thou mayest advance induce me to repent it."

Hugo, who was not unprepared for this answer, seated himself by Sivan's side, and began to ply him with arguments, mixed with prayers and entreaties. Finding that these availed nothing, he proceeded to dilate on the punishment that would await him if he continued obstinate. "Mistake me not," he said. "I do not hold out to thee any hope that thy life will be spared; for the tribunal of the Holy Office, whose decisions are never reversed, hath already doomed thee to death. But thy path thither may be rough or smooth, according as thou dost demean thyself. On the second morning from this, being the festival of the blessed Augustine, this peasant churl, for whom thou hast sacrificed thy life and honour, is sentenced to be burnt at the stake; and with him the no less pestilent heretic and traitor, Johann Fursten, whom Heaven

hath at length delivered into our hands, after so many years of fruitless pursuit. St. Dominic intercede for him! Righteous though his sentence be, it is fearful to think on such an ending to a whole lifetime spent in the propagation of falsehood and disobedience. And such as has been their life, such also will be their doom. But for thee there remaineth a less painful and ignominious death, if thou wilt confess thy sin, and implore for absolution. Fain would I do aught to serve thee. Oh! hearken, my brother. They will die in the public streets of Turin, cursed of God and man, and branded to all time with indelible infamy! Wilt thou, Leonardo di Sivori, noted as thy life hath been for learning and piety, wilt thou share such a lot as theirs in this world and the next?"

"I will," said Sivan firmly. "And if, as thou sayest, thou wouldst, indeed, do aught to serve me, I pray thee obtain for me an interview with Conrad Biorno; to whom there are matters which I would fain communicate, ere he and I meet each other for the last time at the place of execution."

The monk rose to depart. "It is vain to parley further," he said. "Whoso knowingly refuseth to hearken to the Church, let him die in his sin, as a heathen man and a publican. For thy request, it needs not to prefer it. I learn from the gaoler that thou art to be removed to-morrow to the same room where thy brethren in rebellion are confined; for a fresh arrival of prisoners is expected to-morrow, and it will be impossible to assign to each a separate chamber. And now, Leonardo di Sivori, my lost brother, farewell; for I seek thee no more, unless at thy own voluntary summons, to make confession, and entreat

the forgiveness of the Church." So saying, he quitted the apartment.

On the following morning, in accordance with this intimation, Sivan was transferred to the room in which Conrad Biorno, and Johann Fursten, the third prisoner mentioned by Father Hugo, were immured. Sivan's eye fell upon him as he entered, for Conrad chanced at that moment to be hidden from sight by the door as it opened. Fursten was a man past the middle age, upon whose strongly-marked features thought, and toil, and vicissitude had left no doubtful traces. But his demeanour was composed and serene as that of Conrad himself; and a spectator would scarce have believed that he was in the presence of two men, who knew that the shadow of a dreadful death was even then gathering round them. The meeting between Sivan and his friend was grave but cordial.

"And is it so, indeed, my Leonardo?" said the latter. "I had deemed thou hadst departed in time to escape the pursuit of thine enemies; but Heaven, that had prepared for thee the crown of martyrdom, will not allow it to be taken from thee. Ay, martyrdom—for if Conrad Biorno dies for the pure faith of the Apostolic Church of the Vaudes, Leonardo di Sivori dies for justice, mercy, and love, and these also are the very and eternal truth of God. But let me hear thy tale; how and where thou didst fall into their hands?"

Sivan complied, and detailed to him the whole history of his adventures on the previous day; assuring him that he might fully rely on both Arnold and Ernest having escaped their enemies, and concluding with the particulars of Margherita's death. The old

man heard of both these events with pious thankfulness. "Blessed be the name of the Lord," said he. "My son will assume my place, and my flock will not be left uncared for. Blessed be His name also, my grandchild hath been delivered from a fate that were worse than death, and shall receive me with an unsullied smile at the gates of heaven."

"Right, my brother," interposed Fursten. "He is ever merciful, whether He giveth or taketh away; whether He giveth blessings for the present hour, or taketh away from the evil that is yet to come."

"Evil, indeed," said Sivan bitterly. "They who are taken away are always taken from the evil; for nought but evil awaiteth the righteous, the merciful, and the pure of heart in this world; nor will aught else await them, so long as the earth endureth!"

"Think you so, Leonardo?" exclaimed Conrad; "my belief is wholly different. I rather deem that the reign of evil is drawing to its close, and a better and happier day is dawning on the world. What sayest thou, our brother in captivity?" he pursued, turning to Johann Fursten as he spoke.

"Even as thou dost," answered Fursten. "Shall not the good finally prevail over the evil? and are not these the latter times wherein all things shall be fulfilled? To what end, thinkest thou, are the servants of God permitted to be cut off by violence, but that from the seeds thus dropped into the furrows, an abundant harvest may spring up?"

Sivan smiled sadly. "How many," said he, "thought the same as thou dost more than fourteen hundred years ago! In what age have there not been shining lights that bore testimony to the truth?"

In what age have not men quenched them in their own blood? In how many lands hath the soil been thickly sown with the seed of the martyrs? Where is the promised crop that was to spring from it? Do not men hate the light, and love the darkness now, as ever? If such a dawn, as thou predictest, be near at hand, where are the signs of its rising?"

"My friend," said Conrad, "can it be that a little trial and suffering have so greatly shaken thy faith? Saith not the Scripture itself, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ?' Such an issue, then, rests on the sure promise of the Most High; and I, for one, believe that time to be not far distant; for to my eyes the signs of its approach are neither few nor doubtful."

"Such also," said Fursten, "is my faith; nor is it the least of my consolations in this hour of trial."

"It is at least a noble belief," replied Sivan, who could not but be touched by the simple earnestness of his companions; "but," he added after a moment's silence, "I would fain learn what are those signs whereof ye speak."

"My answer is soon given," said the Vaude pastor. "I note every where the tokens of a purer and holier faith springing up among men. A few centuries ago how few were they, whose lives and teaching bore witness to the truth as it is in Jesus. Here and there one in a generation, or it might be in a century, stood forth, as if to show that the light of the Gospel was not extinct. Claude of Turin, our Walter Lollard, the English Wycliffe, Peter Waldo—these names appear in the roll of history, like single stars in a dark and stormy night. But were I to speak of those

whom this century, and especially this age, hath raised up, how long a list might I enumerate! Thick and bright are they clustering, like gilded clouds in the east, when the sun is even now on the point of rising!"

"And again I ask," said Sivan, "what hath been the effect of their appearance? Has it raised up the spirit of peace and love, or of hatred, dissension, and bloodshed?"

"The latter, no doubt, in larger measure," answered Conrad readily; "but the former also in many a quiet nook that the world recks not of. Yet know, Leonardo, that this very disorder and violence but confirms my belief. It shows that not only is the spirit of good awake and active, but that the Powers of Evil begin to tremble for their empire. They never suffer the world to be at peace, unless the peace be one of godlessness and indifference. While the strong man's goods are in security, he sitteth by his fireside in quiet. It is only when these are threatened that he sharpeneth his weapons for the fray, and the more urgent his peril, the fiercer waxeth his fury."

"It is truly said," added Fursten, "such men as thou dost speak of, are ever the heralds of coming blessings, though they may meet with hard welcome from their fellow-men: even as the dove, that wandered over the waters without finding rest for the sole of her foot, yet returned with a token that the waters were subsiding. I can tell also of other signs which point to a like conclusion, which thou, Conrad, in thy quiet mountain retreat; and thou, Leonardo, in the seclusion of thy cloister, perchance have never dreamed of. I have been for nearly forty years a preacher of the

Word. My father received the light of the Gospel from the lamp of John Huss, the martyr-saint of Germany; and what himself had received, he delivered also to me. There are few countries of Europe with which I am not familiar as my own; scarce any grade in society, wherein I have not freely mingled. I can tell thee that every where the film is passing away from men's eyes, and they discern glimpses of the truth; though dimly, as the blind whose sight is but partially restored. Not in the cottage alone, but in the dwelling of the trader and the merchant, the palace, the castle, and the cloister, the load which Rome imposes upon Christendom is beginning to fret and gall the shoulders that sustain it. Trust me, ere long it will be cast aside as a useless and intolerable burden."

"It may be," rejoined Sivan: "nor do I deny that much that I have heard goes to confirm thy opinion. Yet who shall promise that the casting aside of error will be followed by the adoption of truth? In all teaching, wherein man hath any share, there must needs be the germ of evil, which the inborn corruption of the human heart will, in the course of ages, develope and mature. Such is the history of those corruptions of the Church, whereof thou so greatly complainest; and which I, in common with thousands of others, deplore, and would fain amend. What security canst thou give, that the reforms thou wouldest introduce shall not in time be followed by evils of as great, it may be greater, magnitude?"

"What security?" answered Fursten eagerly; "the security which the Holy Scripture itself bestows; the pure unchanging Word of Him with whom is no

variableness nor shadow of turning. Thou hast rightly said, that human doctrine left to itself must needs corrupt; but if the salt of divine truth be mixed with it, and be continually renewed from time to time, it shall preserve the savour from being lost!"

"What mean you?" asked Sivan in some surprise: "hath not the Church possessed the Holy Scriptures, as she now possesses them, from the very age of the Apostles unto the present day? Yet, by thy own showing, it hath not secured the truth from deterioration."

"She hath had it indeed," replied Fursten; "but hath she used it? Hath not the knowledge of it been confined for many centuries almost wholly to the clergy, and but imperfectly comprehended even by the great mass of them? Is not the Scripture locked up in a language known only to the learned; and is it not to the great bulk of Christendom, as though it existed not at all? Had it been the familiar study of all men from their cradles, and known to them as they who wrote it, meant that it should be; thinkest thou doctrine could have become so corrupt, or discipline and practice so irreconcileable with its teaching?"

"I begin to apprehend thee now," said Sivan; "thou meanest that the study of the Scriptures is becoming less exclusively the practice of the learned; and that this is likely to increase and extend itself in future generations."

"Likely!" exclaimed Fursten; "His name be praised, it is certain. He Himself hath provided the means whereby the knowledge of it shall become universal. Thou, as a learned man, canst scarce fail to

have seen the invention of my German brethren, whereby books may be multiplied almost endlessly, without the labour of the copyist, or the cost of parchment. That discovery is yet in its infancy ; but who can doubt that in each succeeding generation, it will be developed more and more ; until the fountain of divine knowledge shall spring beside the cottage of the humblest peasant, more freely than it now rises in the courts of the noble and the monarch ? ”

“ I have seen some specimens of the art thou speakest of,” said Sivan ; “ nor do I doubt that changes too vast for imagination to shadow forth, will spring from the universal spread of knowledge, and be the fruit that discovery will bear to after-generations. Doubtless it will in a great measure efface national prejudices, explode ancient fallacies, test every human opinion by a searching and impartial standard. I can see how it will expand the influence of the wise and learned, from the petty circle of a family, or a society, to the whole race of mankind ; making the tongue of the orator, the poet, and the philosopher, to be heard in all lands ; and forming a bond of union between nations who differ in blood, and language, and institutions. But these, my brother, are but capacities for good, and may be perverted to evil. Granting—for I question it not—that it will in time make the Holy Scripture the common property, and the daily study, if they choose, of all ; will it, thinkest thou, disseminate nought else ? Will the enemy claim no share in this invention ? Will he suffer truth to be dispersed every where abroad, but error to remain confined within the minds of those who conceive it ? Have not genius, learning, and opportunity been, in many an

instance, made the instruments of Satan—will they not be made so again?"

"Be it so," rejoined Fursten. "Let mankind have but full and free knowledge of the Scriptures, and I ask no more. Is not the edge of the Word sharper than any sword? Let it only be wielded actively in the strife between the powers of good and evil, and the victory is as good as won. I only require that it shall not remain longer unemployed, like a weapon hung uselessly against the wall. It will be the conflict of the divine with the human, the eternal and imperishable with the things of an hour! Who can doubt the issue of such a contest, as that would be?"

"Thou sayest well," interposed Conrad, who had listened with signs of warm approval to Fursten's discourse; "thy hope is my hope, and thy faith my faith. I too doubt not, but firmly believe, that a generation shall hereafter arise—though it may be centuries ere such a consummation shall take place—still a generation *will* arise, to whom the revealed Word shall be familiarly known, as the names of their own wives and children; and then will men cease to hate, and distrust, and persecute each other; and will walk uprightly and without offence in the broad noon of Gospel truth, diffused every where through the world. And then shall all mankind, high and low, learned and simple, become one brotherhood in Christ, holding one faith, acknowledging one rule, obeying one God and Father of all. In that faith," he continued, grasping Fursten's hand; "and in the hope that our death may hasten, though by ever so little, an issue so glorious, will thou and I, my brother, face the fiery trial of to-morrow."

Sivan was silent. He was not indeed convinced ; but he felt that it would be at once useless and cruel, for the sake of removing what was at most a speculative error, to unsettle the generous belief which gave them such comfort in death. He seated himself in a corner apart from them, and pondered deeply over what he had heard. There is always something contagious in a simple, unwavering faith, especially when professed by persons in a situation like that of his two companions. Besides, Sivan's natural temperament was such as to predispose him strongly to adopt such a belief. Had it been propounded to him during any of his former lives, it would doubtless have commanded his assent. But the experience of his last stage of being had been too full of disappointment, to permit hope again to spring up readily in his bosom. "I doubt not," he said to himself, "that in many things the predictions of my brethren will be fulfilled. Knowledge will increase and diffuse itself, not of human things only, but of divine also. Hence will arise freedom of opinion, for knowledge is a Titan, whose growing strength will burst any fetters that man can forge ; and the rack, the dungeon, and the stake—those instruments which Satan has so long wielded in the name and to the dishonour of God's Church—must be laid aside. But what then ? Will men cease to distrust and to hate, because they no longer torture and kill for opinion's sake ? Is unanimity of heart and soul the necessary consequence of freedom of conscience, and increase of knowledge ? Had not Father Justin an insight into the revealed Word, such as in all likelihood few in any future age will exceed ; and these, my fellow-sufferers, have not

they also made it their study from their earliest years until now ? And yet, though agreeing in the main perhaps, in how many respects would they differ from each other ? Was not freedom of conscience, again, as entire among the Valdesi, as it is possible to conceive it in any future age of the world ; and yet can I forget the bitter language held by Gaspar Beltrami, or his anathemas against his brother pastor ?

“ Not so. I trust not again to an unsubstantial phantom, that vanishes from my hold when I would grasp it. My lesson is learnt; my folly ended; my presumption chastised. What the All-wise may please to bring out of the dark womb of the future, I dare not again venture to predict ; for no eye but His can discern it aright. But I will not avail myself of the gift the Angel bestowed upon me, to evade the lot which, in the common course of things, would terminate this my last earthly career. They who have been my brethren in captivity, shall not lack the support and comfort of my presence in death ; nor shall their last moments be embittered by the thought, that I, like a coward and a traitor, shrank from giving my witness also for the truth, in behalf of which they die. Nay more, if—as they believe, and I question not—the death of those who suffer for the faith, is as the early rain which maketh the Gospel harvest to spring up more abundantly, I could wish that such should be the final incident of this strange and chequered drama ! If the life that hath been by special gift bestowed upon me, hath been but one long varying scene of disappointment, let it at least end in hope, though a hope, it may be, never to be consummated. Nor do I fear but that my firmness, under the divine

help, will be equal to the trial. The pupil of Socrates, the friend of Hermas and Biorno, must surely have learned how to die for the sake of truth!"

Having thus formed his final resolution, he dismissed the subject from his thoughts, and, rejoining his brethren, took part in the prayers and holy exercises in which they passed the hours of evening, and then lay down by their side, and shared their deep, untroubled repose. With the early dawn the confessors once more entered the dungeon, and demanded whether they would confess their guilt, and be reconciled to the Church, or die in their impenitence. All three returned the same answer—that as regarded their sins against Almighty God, they had already implored forgiveness for them; for those alleged to have been committed against the Church, they had done nothing for which they needed to ask it. On receiving this reply, the monks, with a deep anathema, but without remonstrance, quitted the chamber; and the stern preparations commenced.

It needs not that we should here dilate on the details of the scene which ensued. The ceremonial on such occasions has been so often and so graphically depicted, that little could be told that is not already familiar to the reader. It needs not to dwell, with minute precision, on the solemn preliminaries, that ushered in the hideous act that followed them—on the public supplication to the Most High, for the forgiveness of the condemned; followed by the delivery of the remorseless sentence that doomed them to a lingering death of needless agony—or on the solemn procession in which the symbols of Mercy and Love bore the most conspicuous place; terminating in a scene whose ruthless

cruelty hell itself could scarce have exceeded, where man stood by, and feasted his eyes on the dying torments of his fellow-man! Of all the marvels of the human heart—that greatest of mysteries—there has been none so inexplicable; of its powers of self-deception no instance so astonishing; of its strange combinations of strength and weakness, purity and baseness of motive, wisdom, folly, and inconsistency, none so incredible, as those which the history of religious persecution presents; and of these such a scene as we here relate was the chief and crowning wonder!

On arriving at the place of execution, the three prisoners, not one of whom had exhibited the slightest symptom of fear or wavering during any part of the previous ceremony, were secured to the strong iron-bound posts that had been set up. Sivan, as the chief offender, was bound to the central stake, with Biorno on his right, and Fursten on his left; and over the head of each was inscribed the name of the sufferer, and the crime for which he died. Faggots were then piled round them, mixed with bundles of straw to cause them to ignite more readily. Every thing being now ready, a monk stepped up to them, and demanded formally, for the last time, whether they admitted their crime, and made submission to the Church, in which case their pain would be cut short by strangulation before the fires were kindled; and, for the last time, received from all three the same firm answer. The Chief Inquisitor then gave the signal, and torches were applied to the straw, which instantly burst into a blaze. A deep and awful silence fell on the multitude, a minute before so tur-

bulent and restless; the only sounds audible being the rushing of the flames, and the voices of the martyrs as they rose in agonized supplication to Heaven, for strength to endure with unfailing constancy the fiery trial through which they were passing. Presently this sound also died away; the flames rose higher and higher, and hid the forms of the sufferers from sight; and, ere long, the mortal part of two of them yielded to their action, and sank down into dust and ashes.

It was otherwise with Sivan. The heap of faggots round him had been larger, and the fire had broken out in greater volume than in the instance of either of his brethren, but it caused him not the slightest pain or injury. The flames curled round him in eddying masses, and rose roaring above his head, with a fierceness like that of a furnace seven times heated, but they produced no more effect on his bodily frame than if they had been light wreaths of evening mist. Soon it struck him that the gift of the Angel, which he still carried in his vest, containing as it did the imperishable principle of life, secured all that touched it from decay and injury. With a powerful effort he wrenched his right hand free from his bonds, and tearing forth the bough from his bosom, snapped it in twain. The next moment he fell forward insensible into the flames.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Lord of Death

With love benignant on Ladurlad smiled,
And gently on his head his blessing laid.

As sweetly as a child,
Whom neither thought disturbs, nor care encumbers,
Tired with long play, at close of summer day,
Lies down and slumbers,
Even thus as sweet a boon of sleep partaking,
By Yamen blest, Ladurlad sank to rest ;
Blessed that sleep, more blessed was the waking !

SOUTHEY.

“SIVAN, the son of Elam, the son of Shem,” said a well-remembered voice, “look up, and behold me once more at thy side.”

Sivan obeyed. Was it possible? Could he believe what he beheld? The circling flames, the stern faces of the familiars, the vast awe-stricken multitude, the panorama of towers and palaces, and distant mountains, had vanished like a dream. He lay once more on his couch beneath the shadow of his shepherd’s tent. The Angel was still bending over him, as when he had delivered the bough into his hand. The very smile with which he had marked him place it upon his breast, had not yet passed away from his lips!

"O Angel!" he exclaimed, "and can it be really so? Hath all been nothing but a dream?"

"No," replied the Angel; "it is not so. All hath been true and real; save only thine own part in what thou hast beheld, which, in every instance, belongeth to another than thee. Nay, look not thus amazed. Knowest thou not that the thing thou callest time hath no existence, save through the medium of thy bounded faculties? To the Infinite and Eternal nothing hath been or shall be, but all is ever present. Thou mayest, perhaps, remember the discourse thou didst once hold with thine Athenian master, when he taught that 'the Deity could do all, save undo the past.' Had he apprehended more clearly the nature of Him concerning whom he spake, he had not made that limitation.

"And now, Sivan," pursued his heavenly visitor, "art thou willing to depart? Art thou content with what thou hast beheld? Are thy hopes at length confirmed, and thy doubts satisfied?"

"Angel," exclaimed Sivan, passionately clasping his hands, "how can I answer thee? I acknowledge the blindness of my presumption, that dared believe I could carve out a lot for myself more abundant in blessing than that which Infinite Mercy and Wisdom had chosen for me; but—for the hope which thy boon of existence, again and again renewed, was to satisfy, what can I say, but that its fulfilment is as doubtful and distant as ever? I have looked for more than three thousand years down the stream of time, yet the issue seems as uncertain as when I first beheld thee. Man hath risen in wisdom, strength, and greatness; he is unravelling the secrets of nature; he is learning to com-

mand the elements, and subdue the physical evils that cause him suffering. His power will multiply an hundred-fold as time advances. Nor is this all. The light of divine knowledge also has been poured upon his eyes ; and the simplest child discourses familiarly of truths which the wisest of former ages could but darkly guess at. But for the growth unto perfection of his moral and spiritual being, he seemeth to be but where he was, when thou first gavest the branch into my hands. And yet the same belief that prompted my wild petition, is one which I have found that the best and wisest of all times and countries partake of. It sustains them in life, and comforts them in death. Can, then, I account it a delusion ? Mine eyes are wearied with seeking for the answer to this dark question. In mercy to my longing desire, tell me its solution."

"Put thy inquiry again into words," said the Angel.
"What is it thou wouldest know?"

"I would know," asked Sivan, "whether the time shall ever come, in this lower state of probation, when men shall discern clearly and completely the truth as God hath revealed it ; shall obey His will even as He has commanded ; shall renounce hatred, jealousy, and distrust ; and live together in the perfect bond of unity and love?"

"Sivan," rejoined his questioner, "thou hast thyself answered thine own question. By what is fallen man's spirit to be purified to discern the truth ; his heart strengthened to the practice of obedience ; the inborn corruptions, that stir up strife betwixt him and his fellow-men—how are they to be overcome, unless it be by wrestling with evil, by victory gained through

Divine assistance over temptation? Could the state of things, for which thou hast thirsted, indeed come to pass, trial and discipline would be alike impossible; and earth would cease to be, what thou didst rightly term it, a lower state of probation."

"And wherefore, then," asked Sivan, "is it ordained that man should grow in apprehension of truth, as he hath continued to do during all the years that I have beheld his ways? Wherefore this revelation of secrets, human and divine, which is ever being vouchsafed him in larger measure; if the knowledge of them raises him no higher in the moral scale, nor advances him nigher to perfection?"

"How should I answer thee?" said the Angel. "Ask the Creator of the universe why He hath willed that an acorn should expand to an oak, or a fountain swell to a river. Such is the law of their being, as ordered by His Providence. Such is also the law of man's being, that he should rise, as ages pass on, from the ignorance of the simple shepherd, to the wisdom of the sage. But for the reason why the All-wise hath so commanded it—not even the highest Archangels that stand nearest to His throne, can fathom its mystery."

"And so, then, ends my dream," cried Sivan; "and mankind shall never fulfil the hope that burns in the bosoms of the best and noblest of the human race; and the firm faith that hath upheld me so long is a phantom and a delusion!"

"Nay," said the Angel, "thy belief, O Sivan, is no dream after all. Thou hast but looked for that on earth, which shall in very sooth be fulfilled above. They, of whom thou speakest, have heard, even as

thou hast, the Voice within, that assures them, that they who strive faithfully after the Likeness of God, shall surely attain to it. They have believed that mankind in general shared the same earnest hope; and in that faith they have interpreted each shadow of approaching change, which His Providence is ever working, as a sure token that their wish was at no distant time to be realized. That trust indeed is vain. Said not the Lord Himself, ‘It cannot be but that offences shall come?’ Yet man *shall* be perfect nevertheless — perfect beyond thy fondest hope or utmost capacity of conception; but never in this world; the very essence of whose existence is its imperfection! Understandest thou my words?”

“I think I do,” replied Sivan; “yet, tell me, is there no realization, however imperfect, of the Divine Likeness, even in this world; which, with all its manifold corruptions, is yet the workmanship of God, and is guarded and sustained by His Providence?”

“There is,” was the reply; “but only in the secret souls of those faithful servants of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, who hunger and thirst after nearer union with Him. These have hidden communion with Him, and with each other, and are gradually, but imperceptibly to the world, transformed to His Image. And, mark thou, though the mass of men be dark and sinful as ever; and though the presence of the Purest Light shining among them will not illumine any heart, that does not of its own free will open its secret recesses to admit It; yet when men do thus receive It the Light so admitted is stronger and brighter in each succeeding age of the world’s

history. God hath ever vouchsafed to His children, through the Sacrifice and Intercession of His Son, light sufficient to enable them to please Him, so that in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. Dim and feeble as was the twilight of the heathen world, it yet enabled men to direct their steps; and it grew stronger as reverent and thoughtful minds strove for a nearer approach unto Him after whom they felt. Phares the Egyptian was wiser than any thou hadst known in thy first being; thy Athenian teacher far exceeded him in spiritual discernment; but his light was darkness compared with that of Syrus; and his again paled into obscurity before the brilliant rays which streamed into the souls of thy Christian associates from the risen Sun of Righteousness. Spiritual light shall ever advance as the world grows in years; but for the perfection which thou hast sighed for—the very Likeness of thy Maker—that shall only be granted beyond the grave to those who in their state of trial have sought it faithfully. And now, once more, son of Elam, art thou ready and willing to depart?"

A radiant and peaceful smile broke over Sivan's face as he bowed his head in assent; and the Angel a second time placed the branch in his hand. The old man looked inquiringly upon it, and perceived that the leaves and smaller twigs had disappeared, and it now wore the shape of a simple cross. Reverently he received and clasped it to his bosom; and as he did so, the spirit passed away from the frame it had first animated so many thousand years ago; and the hope so long deferred, had at last its fruition amid the

innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of the just made perfect.

* * * *

Morning broke ; and the stir of active life was heard again in the tents of Sivan. The youths drove forth the flocks to pasture ; the maidens repaired to the well to draw water for their household employments ; the sound of cheerful greetings, and the tread of busy feet, resounded through the encampment. Only beneath the roof where reposed the head and father of the tribe, no voice was heard. His children concluded that he had been overwearied by the anxiety and sorrow of yesterday, and respected his slumbers. But when the sun had risen high in the heavens, and he appeared not, a consultation was held, and it was agreed that it would be better now to enter his tent and awaken him. Arvad, who doubted not that his grief for Rizpah's loss had caused him a troubled and sleepless night, was eager to inform him that tidings had arrived, a few hours since, that she had escaped from the hands of the robbers, and would return before sunset to her father's habitation : and the Egyptian stranger, who was fully persuaded that their conversation of the previous evening had driven every other subject from his thoughts, desired to resume it without delay ; and enlighten him yet more respecting the wonders of the land of Mizraim, and the great benefits which thence arise to the whole race of mankind.

They entered. All was silent. The old man lay on his couch ; his hands clasped over his bosom in an attitude of the profoundest repose, and on his face an expression of perfect peace, such as no human slumber ever yet engendered. Awe-struck, they stood

motionless for a few moments; and then Arvad, bending over him, pressed his lips to his forehead, and started back from the marble chill of death.

They carried him forth to his burial. Old and young accompanied the simple procession with many a tear and lamentation, for all felt that they had lost a wise ruler, and a loving parent. Clenched in his hand they had found a small cross-shaped piece of wood, upon which his grasp had closed so firmly that it could not be removed, and it was therefore buried with him. They dug his grave beneath the Shadow of a Great Rock, where in life he had been often wont to sit: and the spot for many a generation afterward was accounted sacred, as the last resting-place of Sivan the Righteous.

THE END.

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